

# **AN INVESTIGATION INTO FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING IN OUTDOOR ADVENTURE:**

A case study of a local  
authority adventure team

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This work is submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) at the University of Derby. I declare that the work presented is, to the best of my knowledge, original, except where acknowledged in the script. The material contained in it has not been submitted, either whole or in part, at this or any other educational institution.

Signed.....

Date.....

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis develops understanding in using outdoor adventure as a tool for learning for young people. It examines how adventure pedagogy may be applied in conjunction with classroom education to offer physical and visual means to enhance classroom theory.

The core of the study was the examination of a local authority Adventure Team, identified by the Authority management as having strayed from its roots, although not perceived as 'failing'. The researcher became insider-researcher to combine professional experience with research knowledge, envisaging this study as the pre-cursor to an action research team development project. The aims of the research were whether the Team was delivering the 'learning' mandated by its youth work location and whether it could strengthen its delivery.

The study defines adventure, before exploring the underpinning concepts making up the elements of 'The Adventure Team' and its identity within the local authority. Literature advocates adventure as a powerful tool to develop social and emotional literacy, which dovetails into Government agendas on health and education. Although the study was undertaken prior to the current coalition Government, the principal agenda remains consistent with the previous regime. The Government at the time of the research promoted adventure as a means to help young people learn about the world in which they live, and the current Government has not rescinded this ambition. This work embodies learning as an interactive process whereby adventure can engage the individual on an agenda of personal and social awareness, as well as cognitive learning.

Using case study as the research approach, data collection was achieved using interviews, participant observation and secondary data. The research found that the Team could achieve more by developing closer working relationships and by the Authority leadership being strengthened to offer greater direction and support. The framework of delivery was centralising the Team such that it had become isolated, with little governance and without partnerships to make the programmes as powerful as they could be. The conclusion is that the Team could fortify its delivery through alliances to provide visual and physical means to reinforce and support traditional learning, which enhances understanding. Informal learning helps young people to understand how they learn and how they can apply learning, which augments motivation and creates ownership of the learning.

The research is a forerunner to at least two future research studies. Firstly an examination of the legacy of the 'Learning Outside the Classroom' Manifesto (2006) and secondly, an exploration of the influence of the coalition Government's assumption of power on multi-agency partnerships, early intervention and targeted youth support, as was envisaged under the previous regime as the 'Every Child Matters' (2003) agenda. In addition to this, a book exploring how adventure can be used to address formal and informal learning as an 'off the shelf' resource to present activities and potential outcomes has enormous potential in the sustained delivery of outdoor learning as a valuable learning tool.

Key words: adventure, learning, outcomes, team, leadership, motivation

## Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

This research examines the Adventure Team (hereinafter “the Team”) operating under the auspices of the Youth Service of a local authority. A change of personnel following a senior management reshuffle within the Authority brought a sense that the Team had drifted from its roots and was not contributing sufficiently to what it perceived as necessary outcomes. Therefore, the research directly targeted the Team and the aims focussed on two questions:

1. Whether the Team was delivering the ‘learning’ mandated by its youth work roots?
2. Whether there was an extension to the learning delivery of adventure that would provide the Team with an improved corporate identity and the foundations of longevity?

A third question arose in terms of looking to how the research findings could be applied more generally to learning and the implications that would have for policy and practice within the field, specifically adventure learning.

The researcher was employed throughout by the Authority of the Team under study and, therefore, the “double-edged sword” (Mercer 2007) duality of the role as insider-researcher was an important consideration (Drake & Heath 2010:20). The originating cause of the study was to identify the location and functioning of the Team at present and further, to explore how and where the Team could look to the future. This case study was the initial step in a longer-term programme that would progress on to an action research project, looking to progress the Team to a more stable and sustained position. Despite this, it has to be noted that the ideas and conclusions presented through are those of the researcher, drawn as personal conclusions from the interviews, observations and documents. They do not represent in any way the policy or opinions of the individuals

or Authority studied and names used in the narrative have been changed for reasons of anonymity and confidentiality.

Adventure was promoted by the previous Government (DfES 2006) as a mechanism for developing risk awareness, confidence, social skills and responsibility, as well as supporting the National Curriculum; adventure also offers challenge, adrenaline and the opportunity to try new activities to stimulate the mind and body (Priest & Gass 2005:46). Adventure is holistic, offering valuable opportunities to learn new skills and facts whilst supporting individuals to learn how to communicate and work with others (DCSF 2007:6): "a method of teaching and learning that emphasizes direct, multi-sensory experiences" (Gilbertson, Bates, McLaughlin & Ewert 2006:5). The value of this research was to evaluate the work of the Adventure Team in addressing the objectives of learning and to define how the provision could establish longevity by extending its remit of learning delivery. Young people learn in different ways at different times and this research demonstrates how adventure education enhances learning by visually and physically underpinning theory taught in the classroom. The impact on policy is in the potential for developing a holistic provision to meet learning and social policy needs:

A situation where every single young person has a range of interesting, exciting and challenging options ahead of them at every stage of their education, so that they never feel tempted to drop out or give up (Balls 2008).

The coalition Government elected May 2010 has voiced as strong a support:

What we need to do is to mainstream outdoor learning into the whole way that we are looking at the curriculum (Teather 2010).

The impact on practice is in developing an effective provision to support learning through the adolescent years, the period when young people are forming attitudes, behaviours and opinions that shape the adults they will become. Professionally this research enhanced the position of the Adventure Team by defining its location within the organisation and its contribution to outcomes in learning and in personal development and social awareness. The result was to establish the basis for the future of the Adventure Team and its role in improving outcomes, thereby enhancing staff morale. For the researcher as a practitioner, the study provided deeper understanding of the potential of adventure as a learning tool and its effective use. The research presents a potential impact on national policy through its vision of a tool to improve learning whilst developing social capacity. This is a positive message at a time of minimising cost and maximising provision: “reducing welfare costs and wasteful spending” (HM Treasury 2010:19).

The first chapter focuses on the literature and concepts that underpin the elements comprising the construct of the “Adventure Team” and ultimately form the conceptual framework of analysis, beginning with defining the term “adventure” in the context of this study, for which no clear guidance is offered from literature. A philosophical discussion in Chapter 3 highlights how adventure participants arrive at their learning and how the physical and visual nature of adventure offer different ways of knowing and define reality differently for individuals. Not all young people can achieve their potential through classroom learning, and adventure offers a ‘hands on’ means to develop understanding and thereby foster improved learning.

This research is a forerunner to at least two future research studies. Firstly, examining the impact of the ‘Learning Outside the Classroom’ Manifesto (DfES 2006) on the delivery of learning. Secondly, exploring the influence of the coalition Government’s assumption of power on multi-agency partnerships, early intervention and targeted

youth support, as envisaged under the previous regime as the 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children' (DfES 2003) agenda. In addition to this, a published book exploring more specifically how adventure can be used to address formal and informal learning, accompanied by a handbook of activities that acts as an 'off the shelf' resource has enormous potential in the sustained delivery of outdoor learning as a valuable learning tool.

## Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

This research is about understanding the working of an Adventure Team of a large local authority and this chapter explores the literature that describes and explains the theoretical underpinnings of the elements that comprise that Team and its “line of accountability and governance” (DCSF 2010:42). The core of this thesis is a Team using adventure is a tool to support traditional forms of learning through engaging physical and visual senses. The chapter begins with defining ‘adventure’ before moving on to work through the components parts of the Team concept, before arriving at an informed conceptual framework to inform the data analysis.

### 2.2 Defining adventure through its philosophy and history

In order to understand the potential and the context of adventure and this research in particular, it is important to appreciate the philosophy that underpins the field, as well as the history that forms the roots of this Adventure Team (hereafter ‘Team’). Philosophy and theory guide thinking and attitudes; philosophy relates to underlying principles forming knowledge and influencing beliefs, whereas theories are the categorisation of those principles and can be used to explain experiences.

Writers, adventure workers and participants use the term ‘adventure’ interchangeably with others: outdoor education, outdoor learning, outdoor pursuits, even physical education. There is no consistency, no clear definition of or distinction between any of these for writers and readers. The basic, common, underlying understanding is all terms refer to “learning in and through the natural world” (Gilbertson, Bates, McLoughlin & Ewert 2006:5), but such a broad definition offers no help in understanding the field. In this research, adventure refers to the “direct active and engaging learning experiences” (Prouty, Panicucci & Collinson 2007:229) that encompass any intentional use

of the outdoors to facilitate an individual to “develop their resilience” (DCSF 2007:8), to come to know and understand themselves and what they may become. For this research, certain distinguishing features are highlighted to differentiate adventure from what may be understood by readers of other terms. Adventure can be seen as a branch of outdoor learning (perceived by this research as the same as outdoor education), an overarching term that embraces adventure (adventurous activities) and environmental education (see Figure 1).

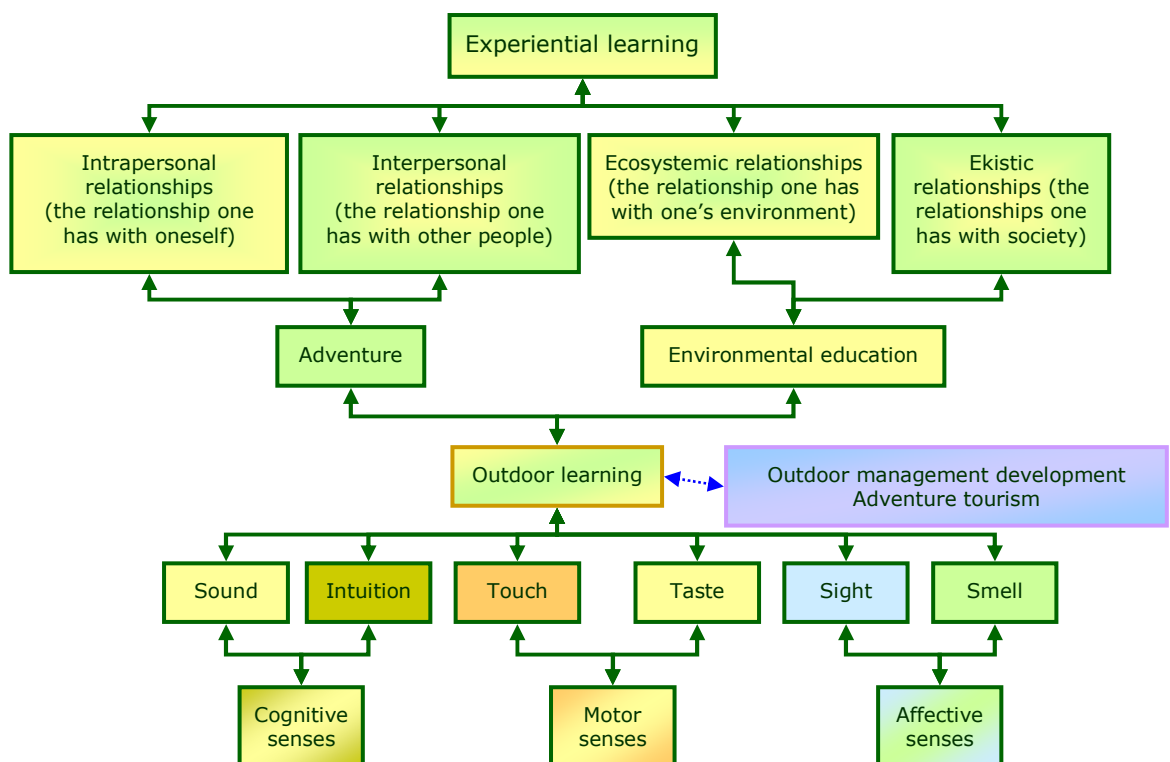


Figure 1: Adventure and its relationship with outdoor learning

Within the embracing field of outdoor learning, adventure sits alongside environmental education in that it engages all the senses but is distinguishable from it in that there is a focus on relationships with people, whereas the relationships within environmental education revolve around the environment and society. Figure 1 demonstrates how the ultimate outcome of adventure and environmental education is experiential learning; that is, learning through engagement, through personal practical experience, rather than narrated information through an inert medium. Outdoor management development and adventure tourism are alternative

branches of coming into outdoor learning, leading participants potentially to the same end of experiential learning, although both of these fields are outside of the core interest of this study. Figure 1 also highlights how elements of adventure and environmental education may interact; engagement with one may bring about awareness of the other:

The time is long overdue to promote a new attitude of humans with nature, where the two coexist in harmony and where neither suffers at the expense of the other (Priest & Gass 2005:2).

Adventure and environmental education are both aspects of outdoor learning that holistically engage the senses and involve the spectrum of relationships encompassing one's environment. Both support classroom learning in a practical way, occur primarily outdoors and are cross-curricular to school subjects. Adventure, however, is distinguishable from environmental education in being physical and demanding, encouraging participants to think through solutions in order to attain the progression of skills as well as to achieve personal development goals. Because it is physical and personal, there must also be the opportunity for the participant to absorb and reflect on the experience, as the learning cannot be memorised from another source, such as a book. Adventure is broad, encompassing everything from "scaling a major Himalayan peak to taking schoolchildren outside the classroom" (Gilbertson, Bates, McLoughlin & Ewert 2006:4). The interrelationship of disciplines specifically within adventure, as perceived by Gilbertson, Bates, McLoughlin & Ewert (2006) are shown in Figure 2.



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*Gilbertson, K., Bates, S.T.,  
McLaughlin, T. & Ewert, A. (2006)  
Outdoor Education: Methods and  
Strategies. United States: Human  
Kinetics.*

Figure 2: Adventure as a blend of various subject areas

(from Gilbertson, Bates, McLaughlin, Ewert 2006:6)

Through adventure, the individual undergoes a physical (and visual) experience in the outdoors, engaged with the self and others. These three elements are inextricably entwined although the extent of each may vary; thus, for example there can be no engagement with the environment without physical skill or interaction of the self or others. However, the diagram above implies there is no learning at these intersections, the intersections represent wasted effort. Realistically, there is no such intermediate relativity; learning through adventure is born of pure connectivity between the three areas. Figure 2 is more appropriately revised to Figure 2a, which demonstrates the purity of the interrelationship. The use of triangles rather than circles removes the implication that only two elements may exist within the process, where each triangle represents the maximum input to maximise the extent of the adventure learning experience achievable. The diagram is generic to the growth attained through engagement in adventure in the broadest sense and therefore may be applied to other fields, such as management development programmes and adventure tourism.

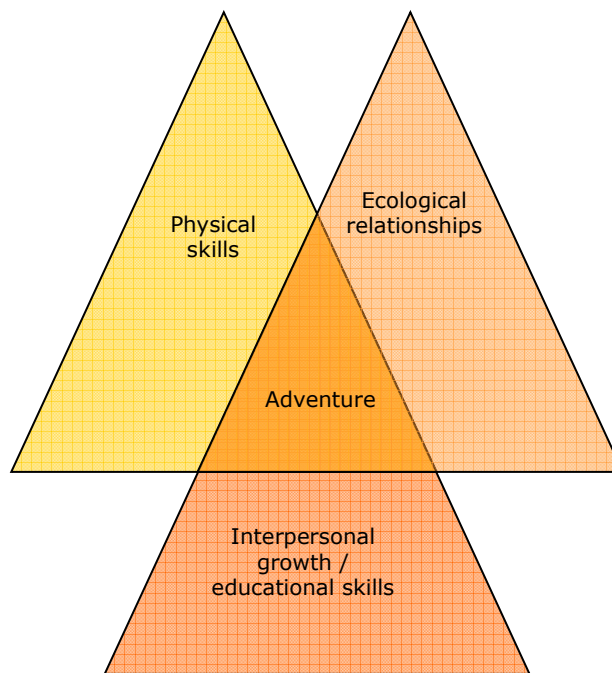


Figure 2a: Adventure as a pure blend of various subject areas

Figure 2a highlights the equal emphasis of each element on the adventure experience. The revised diagram shows how each element remains present within the adventure engagement but the relative size of each triangle may increase or decrease according to the strength of its input to the composition of the 'adventure' triangle. The size of the 'adventure' component would thus increase or decrease as the maximum learning potential is lost. Adventure as a learning tool is intensely psychological, making Dewey's (1910) underlying argument critical: understanding and managing the quality of experience is the key to good education:

A process of discovery is at the heart of any engagement with a subject (Kahn & Walsh 2006:30).

Every experience carries a legacy into the future, so the adventure experience should exist within a framework to define and measure capacity. Competent adventure programmes offer opportunities to develop knowledge and skills "by making links between feelings and learning" that "influence our values and the decisions we make" (DfES 2005):

The richer the environment, the more concrete opportunities there are for children to learn by interacting with materials and people (Santi & Purboningrum (undated));

The known benefits for pupils of learning outside the classroom are many and varied. They include: improved engagement and attendance; the development of learning and thinking skills; and the strengthening of personal, social and emotional development (House of Commons 2010:9).

Much literature is American and contextualised by the vast expanses of natural wilderness there. In Britain, adventure evolved from the 'Outward Bound' model (Walsh & Golins 1976), becoming easily accessible and affordable, with a:

Significant trend to use all sorts of settings and environments (Prouty, Panicucci & Collinson 2007:11).

The true learning potential in adventure is in its ability to serve cross-curricular attainment and personal progression simultaneously, a neglected area of literature to date. Focus tends to be on adventure as either a scholastic endeavour (supporting the National Curriculum) or a social endeavour (supporting personal development). There is literature that promotes adventure as a learning tool (for example English Outdoor Council 2005, DfES 2006, Ofsted 2008) but the literature rests at a conceptual level, with no detail as to quite how this transformative tool may be employed. This research is intended as the first approach in achieving this.

Where adventure with young people is concerned, "the beginning of adventure education begins with Kurt Hahn" (Prouty, Panicucci and Collinson 2007:6), who replicated his work at the Salem Schule (Baden-Württemberg, Germany), creating 'Outward Bound', to develop teamworking and confidence skills. Hahn's core beliefs in personal responsibility, equality, social justice, respect and community service were central, focussing upon his principle of challenging the boundaries of perceptions and abilities. This arose

from understanding the stages (hierarchy) of need (Maslow 1943), most commonly represented as a pyramid (see Figure 3):

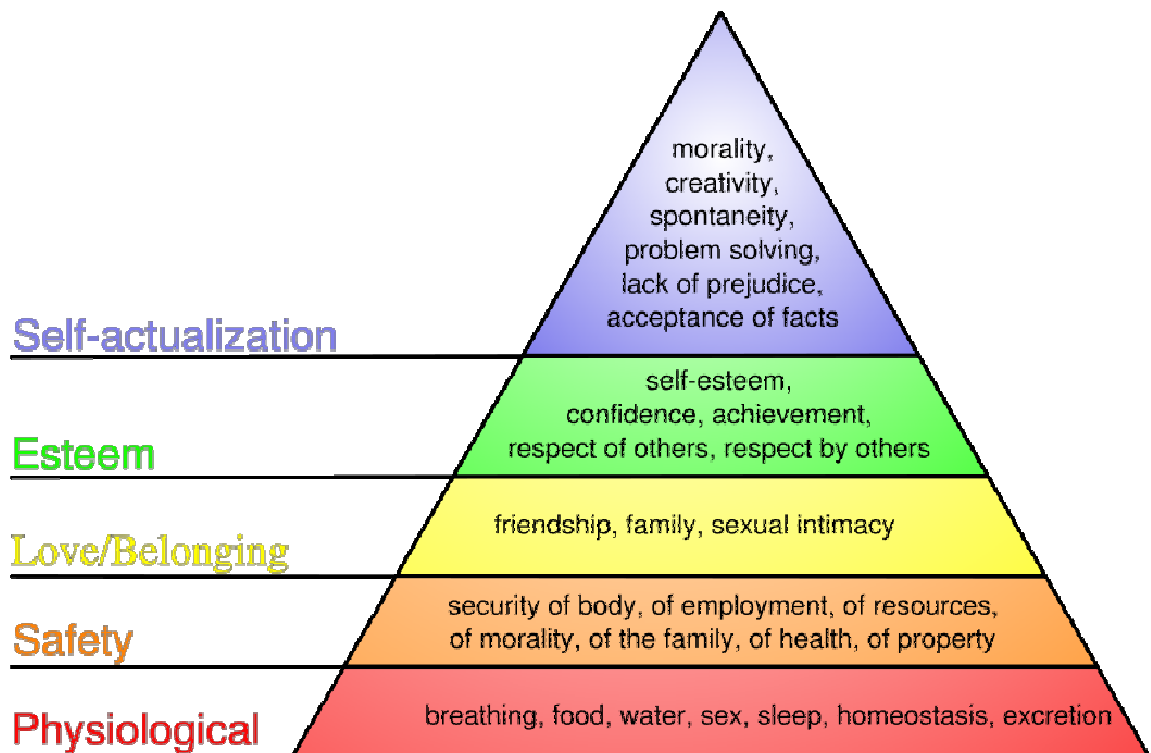


Figure 3: Maslow's hierarchy of need (1943)

One starts at the lowest level: physiological and survival. As the individual succeeds in meeting these needs, they proceed to the next level. Only when lower needs are satisfied, can one consider higher needs. If the conditions satisfying lower needs are removed, the individual returns to satisfy these needs again. Adventure can challenge the most basic of needs, bringing one to re-evaluate existence and relationships. That re-evaluation essentially relates to unconditional positive regard (Rogers 1959). Positive regard is the emotional fulfilment that humans naturally crave: love, affection, attention, nurturing. Rogers believed that nature provides the senses needed to survive; however, humans have evolved so that society now teaches them to overcome natural instincts with a developed but perverted sense of conditional worth. The preconscious mind dictates how people respond to the influences that surround them (Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory of Personality, 1920 (Klein 1976); people only feel emotional fulfilment when they are 'worthy' of it, rather than

because they need or want it. Rogers termed this 'conditional positive regard'. People inherently need positive regard to thrive, so this conditioning is powerful and people adapt, led not by organic actualisation, but by a society that may or may not have their best interests at heart. Over time, this 'conditioning' leads people to have personal conditional positive self-regard, people like themselves only if they meet the standards (they believe that) others apply, rather than when they are truly realising their potential. Since these standards were created without regard to individuals, more often than not individuals cannot meet them and therefore cannot maintain self-esteem. The ambition of adventure is to create unconditional positive regard, to teach participants to strive to their potential, they have value and their inherent worth does not depend upon social perceptions. The strength of Rogers' approach lies in part in his focus on relationships, which is the foundation of adventure. He advocated that no-one could teach another, only facilitate learning, another philosophy of adventure. However, the distinction must be made between a person-centred approach (Rogers' work) and one that is dialogical (youth work). A person-centred approach is individual, selfish, ignoring consequential impacts of decisions and behaviours, whereas a dialogical approach offers a more social response, looking to *informed choices*, where the individual "can choose to live more effectively or not" (Egan 2002:7), in full consideration of the likely potential impact of decisions. Adventure can be said to aim to strike a balance between the two: the opening up of oneself to innate possibilities is person-centred as it is unique to every individual; however, adventure enters the dialogical by supporting the individual to explore possibilities and recognise consequences. The informal educator in the adventure instructor weaves through, building and motivating participants, developing relationships, empowering, giving the sense of ownership and responsibility that moves participants

towards knowledge and control: unconditional positive regard (Rogers 1959) in action.

This notion of adventure opening up the individual to learning resonates Dewey's educational beliefs, that "every experience is a moving force" (1938:38) and Piaget's cognitive development theories (Woods 2004). It also echoes the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, most particularly Article 29 advocates that learning should entail:

The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential (UN 1989).

This defines adventure precisely: the tool to effect learning of all forms. Adventure in this thesis is defined as a branch of outdoor learning that uses physical activities and the senses to stimulate learning through experience and reflection. Humans are endowed with the capacity and an inescapable impulse to learn. Learning is not necessarily a conscious act, but a lifelong process of absorbing and transforming experiences, observations and influences into knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes: personal growth and awareness through life experience. Learning does not necessarily derive from being in a classroom; the brain is a powerful machine that absorbs its environment, processes it and transforms it into learning: "situated learning" (Wenger 1998). The most effective learning comes from the conscious act of absorption, understanding and deliberate or unconscious future application. Teaching is not the same as learning, what is taught is not always what is learned; learners may be passive (behaviourism) or active (experientialism). Behaviourism pays scant attention to different abilities or learning styles, whereas experientialism maximises learning potential by using a reflective cycle to discover learning (Priest & Gass 2005). For adventure, experientialism revolves around interaction and continuity (Dewey 1938), where interaction is the present experience and continuity is the way in which the learner absorbs the experience for

future application; the combination of these leads to effective learning.

### 2.3 Adventure and learning

Learning is at the core of the Adventure Team; the reason for its existence is to support young people in their progression to adulthood, “outdoor learning, not outdoor entertainment” (Hart 2010). Learning does not simply mean classroom education, but embodies a range of concepts that combine to provide depth and breadth of knowledge and understanding, a lifelong process of “social interplay and individual psychological processing and acquisition” (Illeris 2004:435):

First-hand experiences of learning outside the classroom can help to make subjects more vivid and interesting for pupils and enhance their understanding (Ofsted 2008).

The researcher advocates the pursuit of learning as a holistic endeavour, where ‘holistic’ means using theory as well as physical and visual means, combined with creating social, self-aware beings, using adventure simultaneously for cognitive, affective and educative progression. The ‘theory’ is represented by classroom learning, whereas ‘physical’ and ‘visual’ learning are provided by adventure. The researcher believes that learning in this way can add context; adventure combines subjects in a way that school never can: for example, sailing combines mathematics (angle of the sail to the wind) with physics (how a vessel moves through water) with chemistry (compounds to make the vessel).

It might be argued that a curriculum could promote high achievement without including any learning outside the classroom. However, evidence during the survey showed that well organised activities outside the classroom contributed much to the quality and depth of learning (Ofsted 2008:9).

Young people remember time outside the classroom far longer than the “chalk and talk” of their teacher, because of the emotional and

visual impacts associated with the memory, along with developmental outcomes around relationship building and changing the traditional balance:

In all teacher-pupil relationships, it is assumed that the teacher knows more than the pupil. The assumption may not always be correct (Cranfield 1982:343).

The experience has to be planned to foster positive results; the true value of any programme lies in how learning during adventure will serve in the future (Gass 1985:18); activities have to be suitable and there has to be a balance between activity and drawing out learning (Honey & Loble 1986:7), anyone who finds the exercise too easy is likely to derive little from it (Cranfield 1982:343):

The learning environment only comprises the framework for learning, while it is in the interaction between the individual and the learning environment that learning occurs (Illeris 2004:432).

However, adventure is cross-curricular and experiential, enabling students to achieve, without “the regurgitation of memorized information” (Longworth 2004:78). There is also some legislative recognition of a need to embrace less traditional forms of learning (DCSF 2005):

Improving young people’s understanding, skills, values and personal development can significantly enhance learning and achievement (DfES 2006:3).

The way in which learning concepts are presented and supported is central to the extent to which an individual is able to absorb, understand and ultimately apply them (Lave & Wenger 1991:41). As a learning tool, adventure gained a higher profile through the launch of the “Learning Outside the Classroom” (LotC) Manifesto (DfES 2006), which conceded pupils should find out how classroom learning relates to the world around them.

### *2.3.1 How humans learn*

Knowles (1990) argued that adults and children learn differently, believing child learning is limited to directive classroom teaching



("banking education", Freire 1996) because of limited life experience and less developed thinking, whereas adults independently seek learning and progression ("libertarian education", Freire 1996). He argued adults are self-directed, responsible for decisions and actions. Adult learning (andragogy) exists in opposition to child learning (pedagogy), as adults enter learning willingly (often voluntarily) because they know and understand why they need to acquire the knowledge. On this basis, adult learners engage differently, applying past knowledge and experiences. The educator becomes a facilitator, not a teacher, supporting, not controlling, input. The distinction Knowles (1990) was making is clear and whilst there is value in segregating 'child' from 'adult' learning, there is an issue with delineation. There is no clear definition of the point 'child' becomes 'adult' and learning capacity is certainly no measure, especially as many children demonstrate choice about what and how they learn. Pedagogy and andragogy are more ends of a spectrum: pedagogy at one end (imposed, dictatorial teaching), andragogy at the other (voluntary, mutual learning). Adventure contradicts Knowles' (1990) distinction further by deliberately encouraging individuals to use experience to learn and address a challenge: a psychological definition of adulthood (Knowles 1990:57):

Learning is a process of active inquiry with the initiative residing in the learner (Knowles 1990:71).

Piaget's perception (cited in Woods 2009:48) saw the construction of learning as biologically progressive, as cognition evolves with age and experience and as the individual actively seeks to learn. Vygotsky (cited in Gilbertson, Bates, McLoughlin & Ewert 2006:46) posited that progression is achieved through social interaction as an individual learns and adopts cultural norms, succumbing to Rogers' Conditional Positive Regard (Rogers 1952). Berger and Luckman (1966) provide capacity for both, distinguishing between primary and secondary socialisation. Primary socialisation (Piaget's cognitive learning) occurs through childhood and 'initiation' into society; secondary

socialisation (Vygotsky's social learning) is any subsequent process whereby the socialised individual enters new dimensions; primary socialisation is dominated by others (parents, teachers) and is largely uncontrolled by the individual, ending when the individual attains a consciousness that enables them to act independently, an effective member of society and able to form their own subjective interpretation of experience. Berger and Luckman (1966) advocate that such socialisation is never complete, as social interaction is never-ending; it follows therefore that learning as a social activity is a lifelong process. Meaning is continually constructed relative to the individual's narrative (their *lived* experience) and their environment (culture) (their *reflected* experience). Hence, any adventure engagement will be perceived by participants relative to their individual interpretation and interaction with group members. The extent that each influences the individual's interpretation of the experience appears as a factor of the power of their environment and the extent to which the individual is prepared to conform to the dominant culture. Learning appears thus grounded in the present experience of the individual (situated learning, Lave and Wenger 1991); this might be particularly true during an adventure experience, where personal capacity may be challenged and override social influence. Closely related to Vygotsky's assertion of social development through learning, situated learning, as the name implies, proposes that learning is unintentionally achieved (tacit learning) through engagement in an activity, context or culture. It assumes gradually increasing empowerment of the individual towards ownership and control, which chimes with the adventure approach of moving participants from behaviourist to cognitive to experiential learning, and the adventure worker from instructor to facilitator, a process named "legitimate peripheral participation" by Lave and Wenger (1991:29). The process does not, however, recognise a situation where the participant is already familiar with the

environment and has moved beyond peripheral participation. Their implication may be that such an individual has reached a point of saturation, but this would sit in opposition to Berger and Luckman's (1966) advocacy of learning being never-ending.

### *2.3.2 Adventure and learning styles*

Although learning is a personal and a social process, the way that people arrive at their learning differs; just as everyone may be perceived as different in the way they look, act and feel, they may be as different in the way they learn. A vast array of learning styles models have evolved and are the subject of much debate and controversy in their application and utility (Coffield, Moseley, Hall & Ecclestone 2004). There is no suggestion from this researcher that individuals hold a single learning style in all situations; the assertion is that people learn in different ways in different situations and at different stages of maturity, hence this research advocates the value and necessity of a range of learning platforms. Knowledge of one's learning style can support understanding of strengths and weaknesses, monitoring "selection and use of various learning styles and strategies" (Coffield, Moseley, Hall & Ecclestone 2004:119).

The learning styles proposed by Honey & Mumford (1982) and David Kolb (1984) fit entirely with adventure and holistic learning. Both produced very similar models to explain the learning process, each with its advocates and critics. The greatest weakness of both models is that neither accounts for the impact of social interaction and the extent to which humans ape or learn from each other. In addition, cognitive capacity, "goals, purposes, intentions, choice and decision-making" (Rogers 1996:108) are not acknowledged. However, both provide focus (Caple & Martin 1994:20) and offer a model of facilitation (Evans & Sadler-Smith 2006:78), which apply as the goals of the adventure learning model. Figure 4 shows the two models combined; inside the circle are the types of learner and around the edge are the processes most appropriate to that style.

CONTENT REMOVED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS

*Honey, P. & Mumford, A. (1982) Typology of Learners from Manual of Learning Styles London: P. Honey*  
*<http://www.learningandteaching.info/learning/experience.htm>*  
*(11.11.09).*

*Kolb, D.A. (1984) Experiential Learning: Experience as the source for learning and development. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc.*

Figure 4: Experiential learning cycle

(adapted from Honey & Mumford (1982) and Kolb (1984))

Both sets of theorists perceived four types of learner, along a spectrum of cerebral to practical preferences. Whilst Honey and Mumford focussed on styles, Kolb's cycle demonstrates a *process of learning* as well: concrete experience (Honey and Mumford's 'hands on' approach), provides a basis for reflective observations. Reflective observations (Honey and Mumford's cerebral learners) are processed into abstract conceptualisation (Honey and Mumford's theorists). This, in turn, produces actions to be tested (Honey and Mumford's practical people). This testing creates new experiences as new learning is applied to different situations.

Gardner supplemented the work of Kolb and Honey and Mumford (Smith 2008) with his theory of multiple intelligences. The work of these theorists combines to delineate the way individuals absorb and comprehend data. Gardner's 1984 theory proposes all individuals possess a degree of a number of intelligences, combining uniquely to delineate how individuals internally decide to do or watch, whilst

deciding to think or feel. The result of these two decisions produces the preferred learning style. Thus, people choose their approach by watching others and reflecting on what happens or through just going straight into the task or experience (Kolb 1984). Simultaneously, one emotionally transforms the experience by intangibly analysing or by tangibly feeling (Kolb 1984). The models of Honey & Mumford (1982) and Kolb (1984) reflect the ability of adventure to be more than an activity, to be an experiential learning process (Priest & Gass 2005); participants engage all their knowledge and experience to that point in time before thinking through what they have done, learnt and understood. At its most basic level, Gardner's (1984) model highlights that people have different cognitive abilities and strengths, therefore they learn in different ways. Multi-modal learning platforms can thus offer the greatest opportunity for learning, emphasising the value of combining theoretical, visual and physical means.

If there is no effort, no discipline, required in achieving knowledge, there is no respect for it (Longworth 2004); the discipline arises from being motivated and understanding how the learning will bring benefit but also enables learning to become more ingrained. The notion of bringing discrete school subjects together through taking learning outside the classroom is endorsed by Ofsted (Ofsted 2009). There will always be a place for pedagogy; children have to learn basic principles as the foundation blocks for everyday survival:

The objective of basic education is to support the social development of pupils and to promote their development into ethically responsible members of society, and to provide students with the skills and knowledge they will need in everyday life (Cedefop 2001:23).

However, the basic principles should be supported with other platforms of learning. Without adequate support and encouragement, young people will not *learn to learn*, they have to be trained into habits that will define later behaviour, realising responsibility for their own learning. Whilst this seemingly

contravenes the concept of individual freedom, it is actually nothing more than pedagogic sense:

Learning comes primarily from an inner desire to learn and not from the outer desire of the teacher or an examination board (Longworth 2004:23).

Combining theory and the directive nature of the classroom with visual and physical platforms and the self-direction of adventure, young people may be empowered to take ownership of their learning. Such holism can enable breadth and depth of classroom concepts as well as social progression. Defining holistic learning as combining theoretical, visual and physical means, as well as striving for duality of outcomes requires understanding the role of formal, informal and experiential learning.

### *2.3.3 Formal learning*

Formal learning is traditionally classroom learning, where the learner is the passive recipient of an “act of depositing” (Freire 1996:53), towards a product curriculum that is “objectively, mechanistically measured” (Smith 2000). It is “seen as a technical exercise” (Smith 2000), centred on rote learning where “wisdom is inherently evil” (Longworth 2004:23) because the learning relies on “bodies of information and of skills worked out in the past” (Dewey 1938:17). The assumption is the learner has no ability or inclination for independent thought or ownership of their education. Adventure links the desired product outcomes through visually and physically providing context to subjects, enabling “lessons more relevant to work and the opportunity to do some work experience” (Evans, Meyer, Pinney & Robinson 2009:19). The value of not restricting learning to the classroom has led to a call for it to be included in teacher training (House of Commons 2010): “greater scope for creativity and for time outside the classroom” (House of Commons 2010:4).

The initiative is not solely about promoting adventure as a tool of learning but is an active encouragement for teachers to use a range of learning approaches to maximise outcomes and the realisation of the potential of a young person.

#### *2.3.4 Informal learning*

Informal learning is personal development and social education, the outcomes of the youth work roots of the Team, “engaging with young people on an agenda that is about knowledge of the self” (Young 2006:23). The core of informal learning is a process curriculum, advocating working *with*, as opposed to *on*. Learning is based upon “qualities of interaction” and “general aspirations” rather than “objectives about what people should learn” (Jeffs & Smith 1999:63). The relationship is voluntary; the adventure worker becomes “facilitator of learning through conversation and dialogue” (McKee, Oldfield & Poultney 2010:12). Jeffs and Smith (1999) say informal education is defined by what it is not, namely located in a classroom or within a curriculum. However, this is too narrow and fundamentally incorrect; whilst informal education is often not located within any particular building, it has to take place within some physical location, a classroom in all but name, and within some framework of planning, a curriculum. Crucially the “Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto” (DfES 2006) acknowledges informal learning as holding equal value in progression and that delivered in school remains far from being definable as *informal* education. Adventure achieves process goals through people working together, communicating, negotiating and making decisions.

Informal learning is conversationally and experientially based, using conversation to engage and support participants in processing their experiences, encouraging their consideration of options, responses and consequences (“moral philosophising”, Young 2006:60) towards awareness and potential modification of behaviour.

### 2.3.5 *Experiential learning*

Just as the name implies, experiential learning arises through lived experience, progression achieved through personal engagement ("libertarian education" Freire 1996:53), rather than through received teaching ("banking education" Freire 1996:53), working on an iterative cycle of experience, reflection and action, often referred to as the "plan, do, review cycle". This is core to the adventure learning experience, which encourages participants to reconsider their engagement, working together to achieve their goal. Crucially, the learning process is directed by the learner(s) and their engagement, achieved through reflection on action; it is this reflective process that moves experiential learning beyond the classroom and should be an integral part of the experiential learning process:

Evaluation does not take place in isolation but is always a part of a larger whole (Kahn & Walsh 2006:46).

There are critics to the experiential learning process, who fear the demise of the traditional classroom rather than "a more effective means of disciplining the 'whole' subject" (Usher 2006:170). Learning should be underpinned by theory and what the young person already knows and understands from their principle environment and experiences:

Lessons are rarely stand-alone without a connection to other learning (Gilbert, Bates, McLaughlin & Ewert 2006:89).

Schön (1983) suggested that the capacity to reflect on engagement in a process of continuous learning was one of the defining characteristics of learning. He argued that the traditional model of learning consisted of charging students up with knowledge to discharge it in practice (a 'battery model'). Schön argued this was inappropriate, advocating the capacity to reflect in action (while doing) and on action (having done). The 'plan-do-review' cycle (Kolb 1984) enables not only engagement but also subsequent exploration of process, thinking through what happened, what went right, what



needed to change, what was learnt and how that can be used in the future:

By open questioning providing support and challenge throughout, and by allowing the individual concerned to arrive at their own, informed decisions (Kahn & Walsh 2006:106).

Having a follow-up process often relies on a close collaborative partnership existing between the provider (the Team) and the group leader. This is simpler where both are of the same team or have easy access to one another. In the case of this Team, the activity instructor works as a 'bought in' provider, therefore the duration of the engagement and the partnership is the duration of the session, with little or no prior or subsequent relationship.

Experiential learning is centred on the practice of engaging with an experience as a part of life, leading to development in knowledge and possible change in behaviour, thus a progression in the lived experience (narrative) of the individual. Understanding the lived experience of individuals is an important consideration in any study centred on people. A study of literature can produce a theoretical position but this does not recognise the vagaries of human existence: "there is an interaction of effects" (Knights & Willmott 1999:17). Theory defines the idealised or supposed position, but people do not consider their life, their actions and their reactions, in relation to a theoretical framework. Every individual shares the world with others and makes their own sense of their existence through interaction (Sandberg 2005); thus, they engage their emotional and psychological perception to an encounter, unknowingly adjusting theory into a personalisation.

Learning through adventure is a function of both personal and communal processes that may influence the extent to which the individual will achieve and grow. Basic personal capacity will combine with personal perceptions of the self and social reflected perceptions of other group members to determine the way in which the individual

views the experience and derives learning from it (Conditional Positive Regard, Rogers 1951). By being visual and physical, adventure supplements theoretical knowledge and provides participants with additional opportunities for understanding: “the interaction of risk and competence creates the challenge” (Priest & Gass 2005:49). Any group of adventure participants will be composed of a range of personalities, competencies and learning preferences, which can challenge group harmony. Knowing how people can arrive at their knowledge supports the adventure worker in managing achievement, and allows them to develop a ‘toolbox’ to utilise in programme development:

You won’t teach everyone perfectly all the time, but make sure you’re providing a meaningful experience for everyone (Gilbertson, Bates, McLoughlin & Ewert 2006:57).

Quality of experience appears crucial to engaging the participant and thus enhancing the degree of learning. This must be carefully planned and crafted; all elements are important: physical location, look and feel of equipment, structure of the day, manner of instructor/leadership (Field Theory, Lewin 1951). The experience is moved from adventure encounter to adventure learning through the participants being supported to think through the experience and understand the process.

#### 2.4 The context of youth work

Given that this research is centred on a Team located within an Authority Youth Service, an understanding of the philosophy, history and drivers of youth work is essential. The basic premise of the Youth Service is social interaction, “something to do, somewhere to go, someone to talk to” (DfES 2006b:1). Youth work has never been a statutory provision, but “a Cinderella Service, lacking recognition and frequently short of resources” (Ford, Hunter, Merton & Waller 2005:13).

Youth work will allow all young people to make informed choices, expand their horizons, access life enhancing experiences, contribute to their community and maximise their own potential (DfES 2001:14).

The basis of youth work is informal learning, where “participation cannot be compelled, only enticed” (Batsleer 2008:94); development of a personal moral and social code is encouraged (Doyle 1999:5). The offer is made of a positive relationship, enabling and supporting people to “make sense of their lives and learn from their experience” (Young 2006:78). The concept of adventure fitted neatly into the context of the Authority Youth Service, with its underlying focus on relationships and impulsion rather than compulsion (Jefferies & Banks 2005:99). Thus, there was a logical extension to youth work within the Authority to establish an adventure offshoot to encourage participation and build positive relationships. No young person enters the youth work environment with the intention of building supportive networks and relationships, they attend because the provision is local, safe, convenient, has facilities that they want, and above all else, is FUN. Relationship building and conversational support come later. In “Positive Activities for Young People: Expanding Friday and Saturday Night Provision” (DCSF 2009) the point is made:

They see weekends as their own time, when they might welcome contact with staff from youth support services, but do not want to feel overtly ‘youth worked’ (DCSF 2009:5).

The value of informal learning is supported by Ofsted, who comment that organisations fail to develop processes to measure “the formation of attitudes and values over the longer term” (Ofsted 2004:3). The uniqueness of each adventure experience in personal development is emphasised by Loynes (2004:5) who criticises ‘mcdonaldisation’, an effort to standardise experiences. Replication of facilities and material is possible, but not the experience; activities may be replicated, but the impact and learning cannot be anything but personal. Landmark documents (Ministry of Education 1960,

Department of Education & Science 1983, DfES 2001, DfES 2002) established the basis for youth work and 'Resourcing Excellent Youth Services' (REYS) (DfES 2002) even defined working to an established structure and a curriculum to:

Promote the social, moral, cultural, emotional and physical development of young people (DfES 2002:8).

The notion of a framework for youth work placed responsibility on youth workers to offer provisions leading to recognisable outcomes. This provided opportunities for adventure to combine personal development with accreditations, like National Governing Body (NGB) or Youth Achievement awards, aligning it more closely with formal learning.

#### *2.4.1 Every Child Matters – the cornerstone of youth support*

The greatest move forward in the recognition of the potential of youth work came in 2003 with "Every Child Matters: Change for Children" (ECM) (TSO 2003). This initiative is no longer championed since the change of Government in May 2010, and the language and definitions identified by it are no longer used. This research, however, occurred when 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children' (TSO 2003) provided the guiding principles of youth support. Publication coincided with the Victoria Climbié Inquiry Report (HMSO 2003) and advocated reformation of services. Almost thirty years earlier Mr Field-Fisher QC had reported much the same in his inquiry into the death of Maria Colwell, a child who had died in tragically similar circumstances (HMSO 1974) and realisation that Authorities had avoided reform brought Government to seize the initiative. A "seamless service" (Sodha & Margo 2008:74) was envisioned through a "simple, bold, aspirational statement" (Hoyle 2008:1):

A vision of services surrounding the child rather than being determined by professional boundaries (Sodha & Margo 2008:83).

Five outcomes to which all should strive (TSO 2003) provided a holistic vision. Crucially as a starting point, a redefinition of the

structure of local authorities was demanded. Instead of a series of discrete 'vertical' departments (health, education, housing), departments became organised 'horizontally' into Adult Services and Children's Trusts, with crosscutting disciplines. The promotion of multi-agency working and communication was designed to facilitate early intervention (Allen & Smith 2008) and reduce the number of 'professionals' with whom people have to deal:

So that neither young people nor their family have to retell their story many times to different people (DfES 2005:12).

ECM (DfES 2003) emphasised partnership, directing that raising and educating young people is a collective responsibility, with a coherent and coordinated structure in place, early intervention and support may prevent future social problems:

The majority of young people who demonstrate disaffection during adolescence can be identified early during their primary years (Huskins 1998:13).

Sadly, at least one child a week in Britain dies following cruelty; on average 35 children a year have been killed by their parents in the past five years (NSPCC 2011). Much publicised child abuse deaths – Ainelee Labonte, John Gray, Tyrell Rowe (2003); Alisha Allen, Luigi Askew, Tiffany Wright (2007); Baby A, Baby P, Kyrah Ishaq, Alfie Goddard, Kimberley Baker, Jessica Randall (2008), to name a few – highlight children's care and support provisions are still not as effective as desirable; there are practical issues in reconfiguration and new working. Sadly, the historic varied approach to youth provisions has prevented unification being simple or speedy. For this Team, the introduction of ECM (DfES 2003) meant the introduction of a framework of reporting and targets. The move was not universally welcomed:

In the construction of *Every Child Matters* as a favoured way of thinking, politicians and civil servants have aggressively projected individual, collective and

national anxieties into diverse, dynamic, complex and uncertain fields of practice (Hoyle 2008).

For some (schools) there was little change and for others (youth services) there was fundamental change. The change for schools was peripheral, in developing the extended school agenda (DfES 2005a), whereas youth services faced structural overhaul and the introduction of monitoring and evaluation. Many youth workers panicked at a perceived loss of autonomy and a move from "a discourse of calling to one of bureaucratic professionalism" (Jeffs & Smith 2007:5). Rather than seeing ECM (DfES 2003) as "recognition of their work and a firming up of their role", many claimed it would promote "a problem-oriented version of youth development" (Smith 2003:5):

As soon as workers become over-preoccupied with achieving prescribed outputs and monitoring and evaluating their results, their primary focus is distracted from the young people (Jeffs and Banks in Banks 2005:122).

Like many opponents, Jeffs and Smith (2007:4) argued that a greater "individualised, programmatic and accredited form of working" meant a "decreased degree of discretion" and "unhelpful social distance". Workers envisaged a loss of their freedom to build positive relationships and work creatively, arguing they were to become teachers in all but name. Yet informal learning is founded on conversation and relationships, the essence of learning, facilitating an awakening of critical consciousness and liberation (Freire 1996). Projecting ignorance onto others, (Freire's (1996) "banking education") may appear oppressive, but only by instructor and pupil remaining in that state does it become so. Used in the right way, it can be an effective starting point along a continuum of gradually building knowledge, empowering to libertarian education (Freire 1996). A young person cannot know how to rock climb safely without being taught by someone (the instructor). By progressively instructing the young person in using a harness, knots, rope work, foot and hand placements, the instructor is moving (empowering) the

individual to a point where they can not only climb on rock, but can determine their own routes and climb independently. The adventure worker is hence an educator, a teacher therefore in all but name, but also an informal educator in bringing about the confidence and self-esteem of progression. Whilst Freire tended to be simplistic, one is an oppressor or one is oppressed, he presented an approach that aligns with the 'Resourcing Excellent Youth Services' (REYS) (DfES 2002) assertion that youth provisions help young people "gain control of their lives, while respecting the lives of others" (Ford, Hunter, Merton & Waller 2005:14). He advocates a curriculum framework. The word 'curriculum' has become synonymous with school, giving it a negative connotation to workers whose success depends upon their ability to interact closely and build relationships. A curriculum, however, is simply a framework offering structure, clarity, consistency, planning, method, outcomes, accountability and evaluation.

The legacy of ECM will be its influence on future policy, since the concept of accountability based on outcomes and a joined-up approach to children's services lives on (CYPN 2011).

The initiative launched by "Every Child Matters: Change for Children" (ECM) (DfES 2003) dovetailed formal and informal learning into one holistic package, fostering an environment centralising young people and a network of interacting agencies. This presented an important opportunity for the Team to begin exploring new avenues of access and outcomes. The election of May 2010 heralded a new era of Government and whilst not being specifically supported, there is no commitment to discontinue the impetus of establishing the multi-agency framework envisaged (Puffett 2010). Equally, no new initiative has been introduced as a replacement. In the absence of any other guidance, the Authority of this research has retained the ethics of ECM (DfES 2003) and the Team has continued to exist with a remit to frame its adventure programmes around informal learning

principles and support the development of young people. The concept of the Team is far greater than simply the people working at the front end to deliver adventure learning; the elements and issues that comprise the entirety of 'The Team' are explored in the next section.

## 2.5 The Adventure Team

### *2.5.1 History of the Team*

The core of this research is the study of a single Authority Adventure Team. The Team runs its own youth clubs but also delivers to other youth groups, schools and colleges. It is therefore responsible for its own outcomes and the objectives of other organisations. A Team is "composed of people with very different cultural backgrounds, ages, functional expertise and personalities" (West 2012:5); the fusion of relationships and interactions, as much emotional and psychological factors as physical elements (Borrill & West 2005:139); a 'team' is therefore defined as much by its history and influences as its workers, partnerships and leadership.

Humans are the primordial team players ... our extraordinarily sophisticated talent for co-operation culminates in the modern [team] (Goleman 1998:199).

However, latent human socialising tendencies are insufficient to establish a successful team; each element (worker) must be synchronised with all others in a "symbiotic relationship" (Sergiovanni 2007:147). The adventure workers are often isolated from each other by the nature of their work or several groups may be on site together at one time; therefore, there has to be a relationship of shared understanding and co-operation. The foundation of that relationship is the team culture:

The values, beliefs and norms of individuals in the [team] and how these individuals' perceptions coalesce into shared meanings (Bush & Middlewood 2005:47).

Team culture develops with the evolution of the Team. Workers locate themselves within the Team and "assume a certain social



identity within the cognitive, emotional and social frameworks" (Trice & Beyer 1993:10). Trice and Beyer write that culture is created and managed by leaders (1993:264). Indeed, culture "represents constraint and therefore power relationships" (Bennett 2003:53), but ultimately, culture blossoms as the Team:

learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration (Schein 1985:9).

Newcomers exist initially on the fringe until growing knowledge and acceptance of the culture enables integration ("legitimate peripheral participation" Lave and Wenger 1991:29). However, without care, culture can become "stuck" (Gilbert 2005:70) and out of step with the organisation. Culture must be allowed to change over time with Team composition (tenure, age, membership) and, in a local authority, with changing political direction, so that effectiveness relative to organisational objectives can change (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1995). If culture does not evolve, the Team becomes disengaged from the organisation, as had happened in this Team. The more diverse and distanced from the Authority, the less successful becomes Team performance in relation to the organisation's goals (Sivakumar and Nakata 2003). Disparity brings conflict and communication breakdown, resulting in dissonance between the Team and the organisation (Adler 1991). The culture is established through the Team: the component workers and the nature of their interactions and relationships, but it is directed and controlled through the leadership, as they steer the Team in the direction they wish it to head (Trice & Beyer 1993:264).

### *2.5.2 Leadership and Management*

In establishing that direction, there is a strong focus on relationships, where leaders must "combine intellectual brilliance with emotional brilliance" (Fullan, undated). Leadership is an "affair of the heart" (Kouzes & Posner 2007:351), a relationship between those who wish to lead and those who choose to be led (Smircich & Morgan 1982).

The leader must capture the heart and mind of the individual, making them want to follow: “a much more democratic value of walking with” (Gilbert 2005:5) and “understood as part of an overall system of practice” (Harris 2008:10). Bush & Middlewood (2010:10) denote successful leaders as focussing most strongly on:

Motivating and developing people rather than establishing and maintaining systems and structures (Bush & Middlewood 2010:10).

This could be argued as being particularly relevant to adventure, where workers are solely responsible for groups and activities. However, that statement rather more denotes the difference between ‘leadership’ and ‘management’. An organisation is nothing without workers to materialise the product and this cannot be achieved without routines and structure. Perhaps leadership and management are more appropriately distinguished as short-term maintenance and long-term strategic functions. Management is the maintenance function to control, organise and fulfil short-term targets, marshalling “resources needed to support the strategy” (Ford, Hunter, Merton & Waller 2005:122), in this case, ensuring equipment is serviced and workers are scheduled to sessions (“transactional leadership”, Weber’s 1947) serving:

To recognise and clarify the role and task requirements for the subordinates (Bass 1981:12).

This may be perceived as following established procedure or organisational dictatorialism that discourages autonomy and innovation. Conversely, leadership may envision “new ways of being” (Allen 2009), seeking out new adventure clients and developing programmes (“transformational leadership” MacGregor-Burns 1978):

A social architect who understands the organisation and shapes the way it works (Hersey, Blanchard & Johnson 2001:110).

However, transformational leadership may simply be considered as those employees who naturally question practice and seek performance improvement. Perhaps unlike MacGregor-Burns’

assertion, leadership and management are not ends of a spectrum, but dichotomous, specific functions. The Team leader has to both ensure delivery of the immediate adventure programme but simultaneously look to a sustained future for the Team. Both are a necessity and embodied in the same person, the Team Leader. Literature treats leadership and management as linear, overlaying an organisation; managers sit hierarchically below leaders, "cooperativeness and conformity are more valued than initiative and creativity" (Bass 1981:185). The Team can be considered a small organisational entity, with its own leadership and management functions, an independent duty to perform well, but being mindful of wider organisational obligations and with a duty to co-ordinate strategy with other teams. The Team leadership function demands personal strength and awareness:

Vision, self-confidence and inner strength to argue successfully for what he sees is right or good, not for what is popular or is acceptable (Bass 1981:17).

Without such self-belief, a team can remain "over-managed and under-led" (Bennis & Nanus 1985:21), with excessive control over small details (Goleman 1998:126) and neglecting strategic direction. By becoming engrossed in the minutiae, leaders can deny the "offer to control" (Sergiovanni 2001:14) and not provide the competence and inspiration that workers seek when deciding to engage in the relationship. Workers seek to create their social identity through mutual respect and want confidence in their leader (West-Burnham 2011); in return the worker strives to achieve Team goals ("relationship responsibility" Drucker 1999:184), "pursuing a larger purpose" (Senge 1990:208) of a shared vision.

Each adventure worker becomes a leader in their own right when 'in the field', in respect of the session and group ("distributed leadership" Harris & Spillane 2008:31, "legitimate power" (French & Raven 1960), but they must defer to the appointed Team leader in respect of the Team and Authority. This could be considered a parallel to

Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of "communities of practice". The worker exists in a 'community' alongside young people, whilst engaging in an activity, becoming a 'situated *leader*' but that position is negated in the context of their existence within the "community of practice" (Lave & Wenger 1991) of the Team. Distributed leadership is necessary for this Team to function, but permitting too great a devolution of power down to the Team, or even to the workers, risks damaging the Authority's strength and achievements. However, the nature of the leadership of adventure workers contributes to overall Team perception and success, but without the distribution being consciously recognised, it risks being perceived as nothing more than a shared (or delegated) workload and the appointed leader absolving their responsibility (a "manifestation of power relationships" Jackson 2002:2). Ideally, latent potential would receive investment and establish a credible leader (Zhang, Ilies & Arvey 2009), but the Authority does not invest in leadership *per se*, so the leader is recognised through their role. This can lead to tension as such a high level of "distributed leadership" (Harris & Spillane 2008:31) brings workers to a heightened awareness of what they want from their leader. Simply holding a leadership position ("legitimate power" French & Raven 1960) is insufficient to warrant willing compliance; there has to be a single Team leader to set direction and goals, aligning workers through inspiration and motivation (Kotter 1990), or a "societal culture" (Bush & Middlewood 2010) forms that allows avoidance of accountability and responsibility (Fullan 2005), resulting in a Team "becalmed by inertia and loss of direction" (Williams 1996:43). Such leadership must be "grounded in substance" (Sergiovanni 2007:83), workers look to their leader for hope and guidance (Kouzes & Posner 2007:349).

The appointed leader must be recognised as such and retain their authority and control, "the complex interactions and nuances" (Harris & Spillane 2008:33) of balancing people, roles, resources and

performance. Leadership, as opposed to routine management, is particularly pertinent to the Authority Team, as “change is constant” (Ford, Hunter, Merton and Waller 2005:69). Within a change culture, there is a direct correlation between the holism of the leadership focus and success (Fullan 2002). Organisational change involves changing culture and recognising it is “by doing things differently that better outcomes will be achieved” (C4EO 2010:51). Thus, the team leader has to retain organisational perspective alongside strategic vision as it is at times of change workers feel threatened, resistance becomes natural and the leadership relationship is most challenged. The extent that the adventure workers accept the leadership of the Team defines the perspective of the adventure workers towards their role and the commitment that they feel in executing their tasks. The leader has the pivotal role of uniting the goals of the organisation with the adventure workers’ propensity to achieve those goals. That propensity relates to the workers’ side of the relationship.

### *2.5.3 The Adventure Workers*

Not only do the adventure workers have a “relationship responsibility” (Drucker 1999:184) in respect of their leader, they have one in respect of each other. The nature of the relationship defines the way in which they work together, their level of dependency and the degree of commonality (Williams 1996:10), their existence as a group or a team. Both can exist within the Authority, with their existence revolving around achievement of objectives. In this Team, that relationship is defined by the nature of their existence(s): the members of the Team are simultaneously employees of the Authority, the Youth Service and the Adventure Team. The individuals of a group are connected to one another by interpersonal relationship (Forsyth 2006:4); they interact, are interdependent and share effort but hold random skills and retain individual accountability (as employees of the Authority), whereas a team generates positive

synergy, with co-ordinated performance, collective goals, shared accountability and complementary skills (Robbins 1984:110) (as the Adventure Team). It can be seen therefore that an individual may belong to a number of groups or teams at any one time:

The way people work together will dictate how far they can learn together and from each other (Harris 2008).

There is a danger, particularly in small groups, that the unit becomes stable and comfortable, a homogenous entity that loses the capacity to perform ("groupthink" Janis 1972, Ford, Hunter, Merton & Waller 2005:95). Like any relationship, there is a "maintenance need" (Adair 1998:29) for the Team to retain vitality:

The group and organisation are moved to achieve the task needs and to maintain themselves as social unities with a distinct identity (Adair 1998:129).

Although meeting this maintenance need is the duty of all members, they have to be facilitated to do so; workers must be able to sustain their skills and develop. Such continued professional development (CPD) is essential to allow workers to learn new ways, retain their knowledge and remain embedded in the organisation. Developing staff brings new knowledge into the team, challenges existing ways and provides opportunities for team learning. A measure of challenge can be constructive to ensure active engagement and optimal performance; "without conflict, groups lose their effectiveness" (Ford, Hunter, Merton & Waller 2005:95). Within this Team, there is no defined platform to attain further National Governing Body Awards, nor a programme of CPD. Generic training exists around Authority needs (financial training, child protection), but nothing more. The ramifications of this are that workers have to maintain their own skills and are responsible for their own refresher or upgrade training, which can lead to resentment and stubbornness to do any, thus to a 'staleness' of skills and lack of knowledge of current trends, methods, techniques and equipment:

Individual learning does not guarantee organizational learning. But without it, no organizational learning occurs (Senge 1990:139).

The notion of organisational investment in individuals leading to improved attainment is one endorsed by Ofsted in its inspections and reports:

There was always a clear link between a local authority's attitude and approach to continuing professional development and the extent to which staff were motivated, committed and ready to embrace change (Ofsted 2009:19).

The greatest synergy may be said to exist within a structure that allows for "interdependence of the individual and the environment" (Harris 2005:6), a "sense of self" (Garratt 2004:145) through a framework of common understanding and goals. To be a true team, the members must be interlinked, collaborating closely, co-ordinating behaviour and activity to unite as a whole: interdependency of fate (Lewin 1948) linked to interdependency of task (Senge 1990), suggesting size is important to identity, performance and lack of capacity for "social loafing and coasting" (Robbins 1984:117). There is an argument that the designation as a 'group' or a 'team' is irrelevant:

Perhaps the most important aspect of a team is not whether it defines itself as a team, a group or a network, but whether it has a clear purpose, which adds real value to the organisation (Ford, Hunter, Merton & Waller 2005:90).

However, the designation offers an important contribution to unit identity. If the members identify themselves as a single unit, they share objectives and fate, working for collective survival and to the success of the whole; if the members identify themselves as individuals within a disparate collective, their interest is in self-preservation, rather than unit success. The distinction may therefore become critical to the organisation. Feeling able to share a unified vision, supporting collective goals and wanting to be identified as part

of a particular team arise through the reciprocation felt by the worker:

Man tends to actualise himself in every area of his life and his job is one of the most important (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman 2008:114).

As Williams (1996:14) points out, most working collectives exist at some point along a continuum scale between a team and a disparate group. The members of the Team have a much closer relationship with the Youth Service than with the Authority, and a yet closer relationship with one another than with the Youth Service. The members of the Team are interlinked by the activities and the programmes they deliver and the success of their efforts as a whole are more visible to each member than is the case within the Youth Service or the Authority, which are successively larger. High dependency and close collaboration bring a need for trust and openness, "a commitment for the future" (Batsleer 2008:98). Exposure of feelings, thoughts and personal revelations become inevitable, which (like any relationship) can be risky to personal and emotional stability and the longevity of the relationship as confidences may be abused or broken (Williams 1996:188). Equally, dependency can bring a closeness that crosses boundaries: work teams can become personal friendships, as in this Team, which can strengthen the unit but then breakdown of the friendship will threaten work unity and performance. Such openness, the exposure of oneself, is more likely to happen in an environment where the individual feels safe within the culture and nurtured by fellow members. That safety, in turn, is more likely to be found in a smaller collective (the Team) than a larger one (the Youth Service or the Authority), where individuals can feel anonymous and lose individual identity.

All workers have their own unique objectives for performing, their motives to work, hence the basis of their motivation; when this aligns with the proposal of the leader, shared objectives are created (Senge



1990:235). It follows that motivation derives from personal fulfilment, the satisfaction of needs advocated by Maslow (1943). However, satisfaction of need and motivation are not always synonymous (Shipley & Kiely 1988) as people also act through free will, which by definition cannot be manipulated. Maslow's theory may be criticised for its assumed homogeneity of individuals and consistency of environment but if taken within the boundaries of the work environment alone, it provides a cogent hypothesis on human behaviour at work. Thomas (2000) claims that pure financial recompense (extrinsic reward) is no longer an adequate motivating factor for workers; therefore, by definition, there has to be a degree of intrinsic reward (job satisfaction) in every post. This supports Herzberg's (1987) assertion that there are two forms of motivator: the natural human instinct for survival and the need to attain psychological growth, identified as hygiene and motivation factors (Herzberg 2008). His critical conclusion was that the factors motivating people at work are different to and not simply the opposite of the factors that cause dissatisfaction. Hence, the conditions satisfying one set of factors are different from those satisfying the other; thus the presence of hygiene factors does not lead to "satisfaction" but to "not dissatisfied", the lack of motivation factors leads to "not satisfied" rather than "dissatisfied". Extrinsic rewards (pay, supervision, working conditions, status) satisfy the hygiene factors (Maslow's lower level survival needs); whereas intrinsic rewards (the work itself, responsibility, advancement, recognition) meet motivation factors (Maslow's higher-level psychological needs). The unique objectives of individuals that define their psychological needs denote their drive to follow a particular life path: a profession or a vocation. It is likely that within a team working within the same field, all will have similar drives, although each will experience varying degrees of hygiene and motivation factors.

Defining a professional and a vocational worker is complex, even harder is distinguishing between the two. Perhaps being a professional adventure worker is simply behavioural, recognising that:

Your actions prove to the greater community the quality of all outdoor educators (Gilbertson, Bates, McLoughlin & Ewert 2006:21).

They go on to define this as knowing the activity, having a competent skill level, getting to know participants, planning the session and having regard to personal presentation. One would have to contest this as simply being the common sense notion of executing a competent session, having respect for oneself and the participants. Being adequately trained and acting at a high standard are surely more aspects of personal esteem; a priest would advocate their role as their vocation, but one expects a priest to know their subject, plan their sermon and appear suitably presented. The notion perhaps is more related to the adventure worker, like the priest, being a role model and having a personal moral code:

The outdoor educator is the conductor, establishing clear limits, expectations and guidelines for the experience (Gilbertson, Bates, McLoughlin & Ewert 2006:63).

Young (2006:102) observes that "effective practice rests on values", the adventure worker has to develop a personal ethical base that gives meaning to "concepts and values" (Young 2006:102) and "disentangle his or her own motivation and agendas" (Batsleer 2008:39):

In deciding to work for human flourishing, we too must flourish. If working for justice, we must be just. Anything else is hypocrisy (Doyle 1999:5).

That is not to say adventure workers have to set themselves apart, but should have considered responses to a range of issues and situations. The adventure worker may potentially be in a situation alone with a group and must know the limits of their relationship.

The worker's personal philosophies act as the model for that which they endeavour to instil in others, defining "paradigms of what makes for good and evil, right and wrong" (Doyle 1999:5):

Virtuous workers therefore bring integrity to their relationships with young people. Credible workers establish their 'moral authority' through the demonstration of behaviour consistent with their espoused values (Young 2005:83).

The emotionally mature and aware adventure worker has a clear personal understanding, classified by Goleman (1995:268) as 'emotional intelligence'. Emotional competency begins with the belief that the individual is in charge of their mind and the connection between thoughts, speech, actions and their effect on others (Ready and Burton 2004:17). It is founded on the assumption that emotional, psychological and physical states are inextricably entwined; anything that affects one will affect another. The adventure worker has to know and understand themselves to work reflectively, learning and growing as an individual and allowing that learning to pervade the Team. By Doyle's (1999) assertion, being self-aware better enables adventure workers to support participants on their journey of self-discovery, being "alive in the moment" (Haskell, Linds & Ippolito 2002). Dewey (1910, 1938) advocated the idea that experience in itself does not provide ingrained learning; reflection on experience provides lasting learning, which makes the adventure worker's responsibility to the quality of experience infinite. The adventure worker can be the agent of change to the possibilities within the participant. The model is one of empowerment, enabling participants potentially to move from dependence on the adventure worker (behaviourist theory) to independent learning and self-facilitation (experiential theory) (Prouty, Panicucci & Collinson 2007). To be empowered, however, the novice learner has to be moved from the experience through understanding to realise its meaning and potential (Moon 2004). That is the responsibility of the adventure worker, to be the conduit from experience to learning. The adventure

worker represents 'adventure' as a concept and becomes the activity personified, trusted "with personal and psychological safety" (Prouty, Panicucci and Collinson 2007:5). The elements that Gilbertson, Bates, McLoughlin & Ewert (2006:21) assert as defining the adventure worker as a professional all combine into the perspective the participant builds of the activity, the extent of their engagement and the degree of learning:

Effective management is a symphony of student engagement, motivation to learn and ability to participate (Gilbertson, Bates, McLoughlin & Ewert 2006:63).

However, the adventure worker has a professional duty of care and both adventure worker and participant need to understand the limits of their relationship and what language, behaviour and interaction is acceptable. Team members build relationships, often with a vulnerable participant or the adventure worker may be the only positive role model; this can be fraught with difficulty. Developing a relationship involves trust, honesty, respect and revealing personal insights. Participants can feel particularly close to an adventure worker, as they share a potentially hazardous activity or a remote location, enabling:

People to feel safe in ways that do not depend upon threatening and intimidating others (Batsleer 2008:122).

In that situation, it is easy for the participant to forget the adventure worker is an empathic mentor, not 'one of the gang'. Equally, the adventure worker has to be mindful of their working role. They must maintain authority, credibility and "adopt high standards of behaviour" (TDA 2007). The relational aspect of their work brings adventure workers to be *like* friends, but with defined boundaries to the relationship:

To be a friend is to be welcoming, generous, to be hospitable, to stand with an open hand (Batsleer 2008:106)

This is what adventure workers offer, yet they:

Are not 'friends' because young people are not a part of their social life. Young people sometimes tell workers things they would not tell their friends (Young 2005:72).

Commonly understood perhaps is the idea that a professional has chosen their career, achieved qualifications, adheres to 'professional' standards and dispassionately strives for status and reward, with reward and motivation extrinsic. The converse could then be a vocation, "expressions of spiritual prompting" (Doyle 1999:2), a philanthropic drive, where reward and motivation are intrinsic:

Vocation and calling hold some hope for informal educators. They honour the ethical base for practice (Doyle 1999:1).

Vocation implies an ecclesiastical path, a 'calling' where an individual feels 'destined' to engage in the service of others. The members of the Team are educators, working to a programme of participant progression. The role of the adventure worker can therefore be compared to both teaching and youth work. Both were labelled 'vocational' for many years, yet now teaching is considered a 'profession' whilst youth work remains a 'vocation'. However, this distinction would imply that the two are mutually exclusive, that a teacher has no emotional engagement and a youth worker has no interest in their proficiency. Both vocationalism and professionalism are necessary in the adventure worker. There has to be a personal interest in the field, as there is a need for a degree of prior proficiency, qualification and experience necessary before the worker can enter the Authority Team. This designates a large element of "vocation" to the role. However, the worker is adventure personified, the Authority representative and responsible for the safety and wellbeing of the participants. This demands an equally large element of "profession" to the role. The differentiation is important, denoting the distinction between competence and accountability. Whilst the enthusiasm, experience and skill of the adventure worker in their field

will inspire and motivate, their duty of care and position as Authority representation will ensure safety and sustainability for the Team and the field in general. Adventure workers are not expected to take sole responsibility for all groups; as a provision that is 'bought in' to support programmes from other agencies, it follows logically that a partnership with those agencies can only support the power of the programme.

#### *2.5.4 Partnerships*

'Every Child Matters: Change for Children' (ECM) (TSO 2003) advocated multi-agency working, emphasising this does not mean:

Putting professionals from different backgrounds into the same team and expecting them to be able to work together in a genuinely multi-disciplinary way (Sodha & Margo 2008:80).

Rather, it is a relationship of mutual respect for ability, experience and knowledge, which for the Team relates to the young people, the agency programme and partner agency's knowledge of and relationship with the individual. This relationship requires "professional adulthood" (Laidler 1991) that provides for sharing ideas and expertise, enabling a coherent programme that best achieves the objectives of each organisation:

Articulating disciplinary and professional identity is important before interprofessional relationships can be successful. It is difficult to form collaborative ties when one is unsure of one's professional identity (Dombeck 1997:15).

The agencies with which the Team will develop relationships will have the common purpose of young people's progression. These agencies may be other Authority teams (for example, school groups, other Youth Service groups) or external (for example from other local authorities, uniformed brigades, profit-making or charitable organisations). From wherever the groups may arrive, the relationship should focus on the objective of the programme: the young people and enabling a (temporary) common identity for the

partnership that will establish its own culture. Despite the common objective, each agency will have its own governance and procedures to which it must adhere and its own culture that must be reconciled to that of the partnership; for this Team these are defined by the strategies and guiding principles laid down by Government for the public sector.

#### *2.5.5 External environment*

As a public sector organisation, a local authority is responsible to the public and to the Government. Its overarching governance is focused through prevailing Government priorities, wherein “policy forces conformity” (Sergiovanni 2001:104) and dictates the capacity of the Authority to innovate. The initiatives and philosophy of Government establish the parameters of the policies and ambitions to be achieved by the divisions of each Authority service area. It is the responsibility of the Authority to realise the initiatives launched by Government. In the remit of this research ‘Aiming High for Young People: A ten-year strategy for positive activities for Young People’ (DCSF 2007) presented ambitions to develop a skilled and confident workforce that could work to deliver the best possible outcomes. The commitments were affirmed in ‘2020 Children and Young People's Workforce’ (DCSF 2008a). These built on the ambitions established in ‘Every Child Matters: Change for Children’ (ECM) (TSO 2003).

Performance measurement is overt evidence of achievement; for public sector entities that evidence is crucial as it provides proof of the optimisation of resources, of meeting constant or growing demand on a consistent budget. Measurement is not, however, purely financial, particularly in this arena. It can be demonstrated through product outcomes (skill attainment, qualifications) and process outcomes (reductions in anti-social behaviour, falling truancy). Due to the varied sources of its client groups, performance measurement in this Team becomes an eclectic mixture of achieving set targets, whilst simultaneously supporting the targets and

performance measures of others; operating its own youth clubs it is provided with targets of its own, but serving other youth groups means it contributes towards the achievement of their targets. Tangible measures of performance are demanded by the public purse-holders, as statistics remain the most clear means of evidencing value for money and “the quality of learning” (Bush & Middlewood 2010:17). Whilst evidence through National Curriculum and adventure accreditation is straightforward to collect, process outcomes are far more challenging. The outcomes are more individual and relate to personal development rather than concrete achievement of qualifications; it can take years for process outcomes to be realised because the process of behaviour modification (Smith 2000, Young 2006) occurs more slowly and arises from the gradual maturing of the individual rather than the attainment of particular skills:

Young people need to feel safe enough to be open to sharing what they think and feel in order to enter into that sort of relationship. Of course, this all takes time (Young 2006:61).

Measurement can only exist in the more complex form of tracking the change in a young person over the period of their engagement, their ‘distance travelled’. Sitting at the cusp of school and youth work, the Team is subjected to scrutiny from both sides. Despite the ability of performance measures to prove quality, monitoring and measurement are criticised by both teachers and youth workers as being time consuming and evidence of a society seeking to criticise rather than praise, with accusations that the young people become objectified:

No longer seen as human beings with unique attributes but merely numbers (Santi & Purboningrum (undated):1).

There exists the risk of insisting upon monitoring what can be easily evaluated rather than the evaluation of what should be monitored, teaching “only what can be measured and enumerated” (Jeffs &



Banks 2005:107). Seddon argues strenuously against targets within the public sector, asserting that measures may pacify managers and inspectors but do not necessarily prove quality of service (2008:44). He proposes that workers contrive ways to be seen to meet targets, rather than servicing customer demand, which is wasteful, ineffective and counter-productive. However, this condemnation of system reform and the denunciation of performance measures do great disservice to the philanthropic yet unrecognised work of the many engaged in learning provisions, for whom measurement provides an opportunity to evidence their work and celebrate their successes. It is the responsibility of leadership to ensure that performance measures are meaningful, providing genuine quality assurance rather than statistical satisfaction, to evidence the “undeniable output of a particular input and process” (Ford, Hunter, Merton & Waller 2005:162). In an environment of ever-increasing financial stringency and scrutiny, society has the right to require evidence of value, the “combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness that forms ‘best value’” (TSO 1999). The adventure provision is expensive to maintain and an ‘optional extra’ for the Authority. It is therefore crucial to the longevity of the Team that evidence exists to prove its viability and retain support for its sustained existence. An important aspect of performance measurement is that of fiscal accountability, where the Authority must demonstrate “they are delivering better value for money” (NAO 2007). As the overriding power to local authorities, Government holds responsibility for the public purse and therefore controls the finances available to authorities to achieve its will.

#### *2.5.6 Financial perspective*

Public sector organisations have different strategies and objectives to private enterprises (Ford, Hunter, Merton and Waller 2005), whose strategy is an initial investment for products for sale, demand and supply control price; the company objective is to make profits, satisfy

shareholders, secure further investment and grow larger. Strategic focus is on generating profit and ousting competition. Different forces drive local authorities. The majority of services are subsidised or free; 'customers' have little choice or consumer power; public watchdogs control quality. Service providers have a close relationship to purse holders, not customers, and budgets determine quality of service, there is no obvious benefit to focussing on customer satisfaction and increasing demand. Success is a necessary requirement to satisfy the paymasters, but is a double-edged sword: success generates increased demand, but increased demand does not generate additional investment; it leads to the need for greater economy, thus to diluted service and potentially poorer quality. The public sector leadership challenge is to balance this conflict. Yet for the Team, the picture is skewed by a capacity to generate income. The Team has always had the ability to provide activities externally to the Youth Service, such as to social care, uniformed brigades and probation services. These are provided at higher cost, providing a supplementary income to the core budget. This is a unique and useful enhancement "at a crossroads of increasing costs, diminishing resources and rising expectations" (Poston 2011:396) that helps finance replacement kit, service charges and staff training. The challenge to the Team, however, is to achieve a balanced provision that satisfies the demands of the Youth Service, the Authority and external groups.

Financial management is a complex process to do well and not all managers or leaders are numerically oriented, although one may argue that this should be a prerequisite. It is the responsibility of the Team leader to ensure financial surety and make sure the Team operates within its given financial constraints. In the public sector there is no capacity for slack financial arrangements, the Authority is responsible to the public through Government and is accountable: "a key focus of resource management should be delivering better

services” (TSO 2005). Measures of value are stringently applied; this can bring conflict with workers who do not necessarily appreciate the conflict of providing quality with frugality when they see their principal focus as the development of young people.

The core of this study is ‘The Adventure Team’, which is broader than the workforce. It is a complex and interactive amalgam of the culture, leadership and workers, and the way in which they are driven, directed and supported by the surrounding resources. The team are restricted in terms of their ability to control fully all aspects of their work by virtue of their position in the organisational hierarchy, but this does not affect their mission to improve learning through adventure. All employees are bound by the policy of their organisation and, in the Authority, the organisation is bound by political direction; so whilst the workers’ feelings towards the Team leader or the Authority may not always be positive, this primary objective of supporting learning is in itself supported by the organisation in terms of the facilities and resources being provided. In the past the organisation may be accused of allowing too great a devolution of control to the team (thus the need now to realign the perspective of the Team), without retaining oversight or links to ensure co-ordination and communication. The danger is that the nature of the work requires the adventure workers to have a high degree of ‘freedom’ (distributed leadership), but without underlying communication and acceptance of the overarching Authority goals, distributed leadership and empowerment of the Team brings a tension for the future to recognise and allow that ‘freedom’. The challenge for both team and organisation is to establish, accommodate and support an emerging change in culture that recognises the professional nature of the Team.

## 2.6 The foundations of the adventure programme

Anyone can head off to the hills for a walk or down a river in a canoe. This is not adventure; it may be adventurous but it is not the

structured experience to establish the foundations of self-awareness and facilitate learning. The aim of adventure programmes is simple – to encourage awareness and a positive relationship with the outdoors, promoting familiarity and ownership:

The product of most adventure programs is people who understand themselves more fully and relate to others more effectively (Priest & Gass 2005:19).

In order to build the framework within which a meaningful adventure experience can take place, the adventure worker has to have a knowledge and understanding of the underlying theories that form the basis of impactful adventure programmes leading to sustainable learning. Crossland (2008) echoes Seddon's (2008) dissatisfaction with modern culture and uses a popular contemporary topic, diet, to explain the various adventure experiences. Nutrition (adventure) has moved increasingly towards 'fast food' (quick thrills), 'gourmet food' (rare treats) and 'junk food' (cheap and unfulfilling). His analogy is that healthy eating has become lost in the ever-increasing pace of life; one rarely takes the time to prepare something unique and beneficial. Similarly in life, society tends towards quick thrills and 'one off' treats (extreme excitements offering short-lived satisfaction) with scant regard for natural, impactful experiences that are the basis for lifelong learning and developing life skills.

Give a child a taster kayak session of splashing and games and you teach them that getting wet is fun or miserable, depending on their taste. Teach a child the skills to conduct an independent journey and you may teach them that they are strong enough to set themselves goals and achieve them step-by-step (Crossland 2008:9).

The activity itself does not deliver learning, it is the way in which the educator communicates and draws out learning. A well-constructed, well-run adventure session is enlivening, motivating participants to want more: "feelings of well-being connected to their bodily experiences" (Boniface 2006:14). Well-constructed adventure programmes move people from their 'comfort zone', where they exist

in equilibrium into their 'stretch zone', where learning potential is maximised as the senses become enlivened to stimulate focus and concentration:

The objective of outdoor adventure activities is to take people from the 'comfort zone', where they can easily cope ... into the 'adventure zone', where thrills and spills can excite (Knight and Anderson 2004:2).

The states of learning existence may be represented as a series of concentric circles, with the individual in the centre (see Figure 5). Without challenge, the individual remains within their comfort zone, calm, relaxed, even bored. As something new appears, the individual enters the stretch zone, interested, curious and receptive to learn, senses become stimulated. However, if that disruption poses too much of a challenge, it becomes a threat and the individual moves into panic, where senses become volatile and no learning occurs.

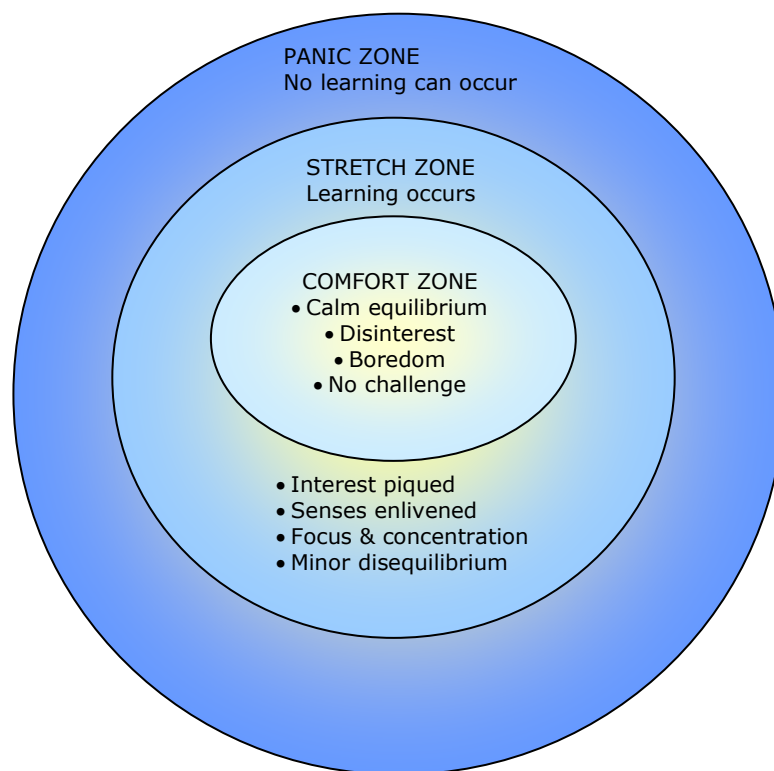


Figure 5: The states of learning existence

As Figure 5 demonstrates, learning is a fine balance of new opportunities/experiences and receptivity of the learner is dependent upon the way the disruption to their existence is introduced and how

they are facilitated to engage. Poorly devised programmes either do not move people out of their comfort zone or moves them straight into the 'panic zone', where high stress prevents logical thought or absorption of information (Priest & Gass 2005, Prouty, Panicucci & Collinson 2007):

Experience has shown that learning occurs when people are in their stretch zone (Prouty, Panicucci & Collinson 2007:39).

The model assumes that placing an individual into a challenging or stressful situation will bring them naturally to 'rise to the occasion', overcoming hesitation to grow and learn. It also assumes that the adventure worker can competently assess and manage each individual's locus of comfort and, more critically, the point at which they will move from one sphere to the next. There are critics to the model who challenge the idea that adventure workers untrained in psychology or clinical skills encourage Hahnian strategies of risk taking and potential failure (Brown 2008). The model should be thought of more as a process that demonstrates the concept of adventure learning, not a framework by which workers should build programmes based on learning through stress. Adventure programmes should challenge participants but allow them to advance beyond their comfort zone only when they are emotionally and psychologically ready to do so.

The three components of any adventure activity should be the briefing (framing), the 'doing' (activity) and the debriefing (reflection). The process can be thought of as a wave (Priest & Gass 2005) (see Figure 6). The briefing is the initial trough, critical to set the scene and define expectations; this lead-up builds anticipation and prepares participants for what is to come. The crest is the 'doing', the peak, the climax to the event that equates to the 'concrete experience' phase of Kolb's (1984) cycle. The final trough is debrief, the stillness of reflection after the wave has passed, leading to the next trough or flat beach of inactivity. This final stage

equates to the reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation phases of Kolb's (1984) cycle:



Figure 6: The Adventure Wave (Priest & Gass 2005)

Figure 6 demonstrates the construction and content that should comprise a meaningful adventure learning session, as first advocated by Schoel, Prouty & Radcliffe (1988). The depiction is simple and clearly demonstrates how the learning process should develop. However, it presents the session as a single entity, existing in isolation from external influences. The weaknesses of this are best demonstrated through placing the adventure wave into its natural environment. Waves are created by kinetic energy moving through the water; although the movement is continually forwards, the motion is a series of spirals. This represents the reality of the learning process in that participants often have to 'unlearn' in order to progress, that is, they have to re-evaluate previous learning to apply it to a new context. The adventure wave makes certain core assumptions: firstly that the participants have relevant existing knowledge they willingly apply to the present session because they want to move forwards; secondly that the adventure worker has sufficient knowledge of the participants that may be competently used to move them forwards; thirdly that learners will learn in the

same way as each other and fourthly that learners will learn in the same way every time. None is necessarily true. The depiction of the wave refers to the height of the wave (the extent of the learning); in nature, waves are never uniform, wave height is a function of the strength of the wind and the nature, angle and depth of the seabed and varies continually, waves may join or may exist singly. So it is with learning, the extent of learning will be variable and each adventure learning experience (each wave) may or may not have a direct connection to other experiences or be immediately relevant to a participant's life. The external environment of the individual (the wind, the seabed) plays an important role in the extent and nature of their engagement (motivation, self-confidence, group relationship, perceptions of others). The wave also ignores the ultimate fate of waves: the seabed eventually shelves upward and the energy falls over itself, with the wave dissipating onto the shore: without a planned continuation, the experience dissolves away and its value squandered.

The 'adventure wave' reflects a popular, fashionable lesson idea that swept learning circles at one time and, whilst it presents a useful way of visualising the construction of an adventure session, it should be applied with caution and awareness in designing a complete programme. The elements of the wave, when thoughtfully, purposefully and deliberately put together, create a powerful vehicle for learning (Schoel, Prouty, & Radcliffe 1988). The foundation of a positive and effective learning experience is in its preparation, planning precisely how each element fits together, sequencing a progressive experience. Each group has different needs, so the plan must be flexible, with staged accomplishments to enable achievement if the core activity is not fully accomplished. During the activity itself, participants will have a wide spectrum of reactions, they may relax, learn to trust, try new approaches, ways of thinking or they may rebel against the activity and even the leader. Following the activity,



the group moves into a time of reflection. This involves discussing all aspects of the activity, supporting understanding and learning. The debriefing session is what makes the activity a meaningful learning experience for the group.

Adventure programs use direct and purposeful experiences that challenge clients and have natural consequences (Priest & Gass 2005:157).

Adventure involves risk: actual potential physical endangerment or psychological jeopardy. However that “more complete learning experience” (Gilbertson, Bates, McLaughlin, Ewert 2006:5) engages participants in such a way that “the notion of risk is displaced by the concept of control” (Boniface 2006:11). The intent may be cognitive, product oriented, in a behaviourist style with the learner “an empty vessel where the teacher’s role is to fill it with knowledge” (Allison & Pomeroy 2000:93). Alternatively, the intent may be affective, process oriented, an experiential style with the learner intrinsically motivated, incorporating “cognition and behaviour with conscious perceptions and reflections” (Priest & Gass 2002:15):

The focus on pre-specified goals may lead both educators and learners to overlook learning that is occurring as a result of their interactions but which is not listed as an objective (Smith 2000).

A competent and skilled adventure instructor will recognise both product and process outcomes as equally valid and facilitate both in programmes, irrespective of founding programme aims, able to manage both physical and psychological risks so they become an essential part of the experience:

The blend of risks is an exciting medium in which to learn and grow (Prouty, Panicucci & Collinson 2007:58).

Adventure programming is more than simply compiling a list of activities and delivering them. There is a whole process of planning that combines aims and learning outcomes; it draws on established theory to develop a structure of introduction and relationship building, activity engagement and potential learning and finally

review and reinforcement of learning and transferable skills. This must all be done within a deliberate framework, designed to engineer a holistic process of meaningful learning and reflection towards the building of (transferable) knowledge: the facilitation of learning (Rogers 1951):

These skills help to shape how young people view themselves, their level of self-esteem and aspiration and the extent to which they can take control of their own lives ... A lack of these skills may also be one of the root causes of the poor behaviour of a minority of teenagers (DCSF 2007:12).

With young people rests the welfare of the future, “young people matter today and are also our future” (McKee, Oldfield & Poultney 2010:7). With no investment by society, the young will fail to attain capacity to sustain the infrastructure and development of the nation and fail to develop the social awareness and moral fortitude that makes communities thrive as safe, supportive and engaging places to live. It is the duty of all within society to ensure that there is a functional framework in place to enable that learning to take place:

We need to ensure we properly protect children at risk within a framework of universal services which support every child to develop their full potential and which aim to prevent negative outcomes (TSO 2003:6).

An important part of building universal support is providing a platform for social education. Through carefully devised session planning young people from different backgrounds, of different abilities and with different ways of thinking can be brought together with the common task of the adventurous activity. By having contact with people outside of their usual group, participants come to new understanding and develop new alliances. An important outcome for society of adventure is the development of self-awareness. This self-knowledge can be used to develop social justice programmes. As adventure produces learning and develops understanding amongst groups, it brings tolerance. With that comes altruism and the impetus to develop fairness:

Social equality makes demands of individuals: in order to achieve a society of equals, and also in this case, the fair distribution of certain social goods, individuals need to uphold the values of social equality (Fourie 2006)

As participants are brought to understand themselves through adventure, they realise their underlying propensities and the consequences of their actions, bringing a more enlightened existence. Similarly, health issues like obesity, asthma and diabetes can be addressed through activities outdoors, as participants experience different forms of exercise, learn their capacities and learn the extent and limitation of their engagement:

A well designed and managed outdoor environment, to provide a range of opportunities and experiences that are essential to healthy growth and development and can never be replicated inside a building, however well designed or resourced (House of Commons 2010:36).

Such transformative cultural initiatives take time and planning. Through adventure, participants work in a safe, non-judgemental environment to discover their abilities and build confidence to continue in other environments. Challenging activities can be used to address social and urban problems, such as gun and knife crime, gang culture or social hierarchies, by bringing groups together who do not normally engage or who would customarily engage on a negative basis:

Activities such as walking, cycling and riding can burn up to 380 calories an hour. Green spaces can stabilise anger in young people, which can help prevent antisocial behaviour. Outdoor education could therefore play a key role in reducing the amount of permanent and fixed exclusions for physical and verbal abuse in schools, which currently run at the eye-watering level of 300,000 cases per year. Outdoor learning could also help to reduce the cost of youth crime and obesity, which is estimated at an even more staggering and depressing £5 billion per annum for the taxpayer to pick up (Hart 2010).

To be productive, adventure must exist in a framework of learning and progression:

Outdoor adventure education, if about anything, is about providing opportunities for young people to explore and develop their spirit (Crossland 2008:7).

These opportunities cannot be accidental experiences but must be carefully crafted to maximise the benefit derived. When designing activities, it is vital the instructor build the programme around the desired outcomes. Literature often refers to adolescence as being “a crucial transition period” (DCSF 2007:3). This, as Young highlights, implies “the beginning of an end” (2006:28), an inactive state where young people enter in one form and come out in another, much like a caterpillar enters the chrysalis and emerges a butterfly. Life is more of a progressional path; an individual evolves along a route, with total dependence at birth and moving incessantly towards independence and adulthood at the end. The challenge for adventure workers is to match reality with the expectations of participants:

In the beginnings of our history as a nation and a culture, nature was a competitor, a harsh environment to be subdued. Once under control, it no longer posed a threat but an opportunity for aesthetic and recreational exploration (King 1996:1).

For decades, globally successful films have presented a skewed picture of reality. Young people nowadays are “constantly entertained, informed or connected to other people” (Kyle 2008), which can be seen as bringing new freedoms or as being a decline in opportunities for traditional ‘family time’ to facilitate personal development and social education. The media provides little support, but pervades lives. Television, films, magazines, the internet, computer games, mobile telephones – all have the ability to portray a vision of a perceived perfection to which young people feel they must strive (Conditional Positive Regard, Rogers 1959):

Young people are another country – to be visited, understood and, if we follow the imperial tradition, colonized (Jeffs & Smith 1999a:8)

There are negative effects to be expected from this lack of structured upbringing, as manifestations of aggression, body image,

stereotyping or through poor physical health or psychological development (Kyle 2008) where young people are "in deficit" (Jeffs & Smith 1999a). Without the psychological literacy that traditionally arose through "traditional cross-generational support networks" (C4EO 2010:6) to question these images, young people are left powerless. Without structured, consistent provision, young people are left to their own impulses (Barnes, Bryson & Smith 2006). This is where adventure offers support, engaging participants to learn about themselves and how to manage their existence within the technological world. However, reality is a poor match for the artificial constructions of nature and, for many, the outdoors has become 'disnified', where "nature is constantly cajoled to 'behave' itself" (Borrie 1999:73). Films, theme parks and the media all present the purest form of escapism, subtly playing to the subconscious; Lasswell (1935) equated the media to a hypodermic needle that would inject and infect the cultural body and affect popular ideology. Whilst not alone, Disney has become an extremely powerful social force to which young people are subjected; the saturation marketing that accompanies any popular release brings Disney to be a part of the social pedagogy of any society in which it operates (Giroux 2002:100). The inescapable nature of modern media is that it surrounds young people with images from a young age, an age at which they have no emotional or psychological literacy with which to distinguish between reality and fantasy (Kyle 2008, James 2009), to understand that Disney represents a "social order which is controlled by an all-powerful organisation" (Bryman 1999). Bryman continues to point out that great efforts are made to make the visualisation appear to be naturally occurring, with no sign of human manipulation; "order within a formally free setting has to be typically accomplished in a covert, indirect manner" (Wright 2006). It appears to impressionable young people that the social issues that plague

them (obesity, acne, friendships, relationships, bullying, acceptance, poverty, crime, achievement) are non-existent outside of their lives:

Not only is dirt, crime and poverty removed, but social deviance is curtailed (Borrie 1999:75).

To young people with a developing but immature sense of self, these images are attractive and become the embodiment of how they should look and act and how their lives should play out. These images become the quintessence of conditional positive regard (Rogers 1959) and the representation of how young people imagine the world and their existence and interactions within it. The (potential) dangers that come with outdoor activity and the (perceived) risk of engagement with adventure are not represented; the visualisation is colourful, with sunshine and laughter, without emotional or physical consideration:

Because the construction and experience of nature is so well done at Disney, it is difficult for some not to expect the 'real' world to also be this way (Borrie 1999:73).

Adventure operates within a physical arena; the participant must exert bodily effort to achieve outcomes, alongside that come emotional engagement with trying something new, interacting with others, not wanting to fail. Celluloid and the media convey none of this. When it is raining or windy, when participants are hot (or cold), tired, aching, hungry, arguing with their group, not succeeding in their task, the 'disnified' view of nature becomes so much more attractive and reality becomes a cruel, vicious enemy. The celluloid and computer fantasy offers escapism and comfort, unable to demonstrate how *real* engagement with adventure can blow away even the first level of Maslow's (1943) hierarchy; warmth, food, comfort, shelter are not guaranteed when outdoors. The challenge of the adventure worker is to build challenging adventure programmes that stimulate participants, and then provide the momentum and the motivation to persevere, coaxing and encouraging them not to

surrender but to work toward positive outcomes that can be recognised and celebrated.

## 2.7 The outcomes of adventure

Adventure outcomes arise from the fact that adventure is both a learning and a developmental experience. It can address both formal and informal learning aims in its ability to effect motor development (skill acquisition and progression) and cognitive development (personal development and social education). Cognitive development itself may be sub-divided into intrapersonal and interpersonal outcomes. Intrapersonal outcomes relate to personal growth, the development of a personal moral code and social tolerance; interpersonal outcomes relate the interactive nature of adventure programmes, the way that individuals interact and learn to exist within a group and the roles that people assume (Belbin 1993):

It provides a framework for learning that uses surroundings and communities outside the classroom (DfES 2006:3).

Informal learning remains core to the outcomes of adventure, as it challenges “taken-for-granted convictions about the every day” (Batsleer 2008:19) that form the basis of existence; it questions the influences and pressures that surround people. Informal learning is crucially driven by a purpose, the focus may be rock climbing, kayaking, healthy eating or safe relationships, but the aim is to develop enriched individuals, to support them in making informed choices and lead fulfilled lives. Even within National Curriculum programmes, informal outcomes of a product curriculum cannot be avoided, although they may not be formally acknowledged:

This involves seeking to foster learning in the situations where we work (Jeffs & Smith 1996:19).

Accredited outcomes are simply defined by the achievement of certification, for example a Royal Yachting Association (RYA) Stage 1. These are *product* outcomes, the (primary) objective of school (formal learning) programmes and the by-product of Youth Service

(informal learning) programmes. The more subjective individual personal development outcomes (the recorded outcomes of REYS (DfES 2002) have always been more of a nebulous concept and much harder to evidence. These are *process* outcomes, the primary outcomes of Youth Service (informal learning) programmes and the by-product of school (formal learning) programmes. The best outcome is achieved with engagement over a sustained period, as process outcomes often only reveal themselves in the longer term and a short period of engagement may expose no apparent learning (Smith 2000):

Holistic education is based on the premise that each person finds identity, meaning and purpose in life through connections to the community, to the natural world, and to spiritual values (Miller 2000).

The inescapable outcomes of adventure are formal learning (skill acquisition, accreditation attainment) and informal learning (social education, personal development). Although focus is commonly on one or the other, a truly effective adventure learning programme may encompass both, towards the creation of social, self-aware beings. The two forms of learning (formal and informal) may be thought of as two parts to a whole, brought together through adventure. This is the concept of holistic learning, as envisaged through this study: combining school learning and accreditation with personal development and social education through adventure. This holism enables young people to evolve into motivated and aware adults who can and will contribute positively to society and support thriving communities in awareness of their actions and consequences. This notion may be represented visually (see Figure 7) to highlight an environment of “learning and support that all young people should enjoy” (DCSF 2008:53).



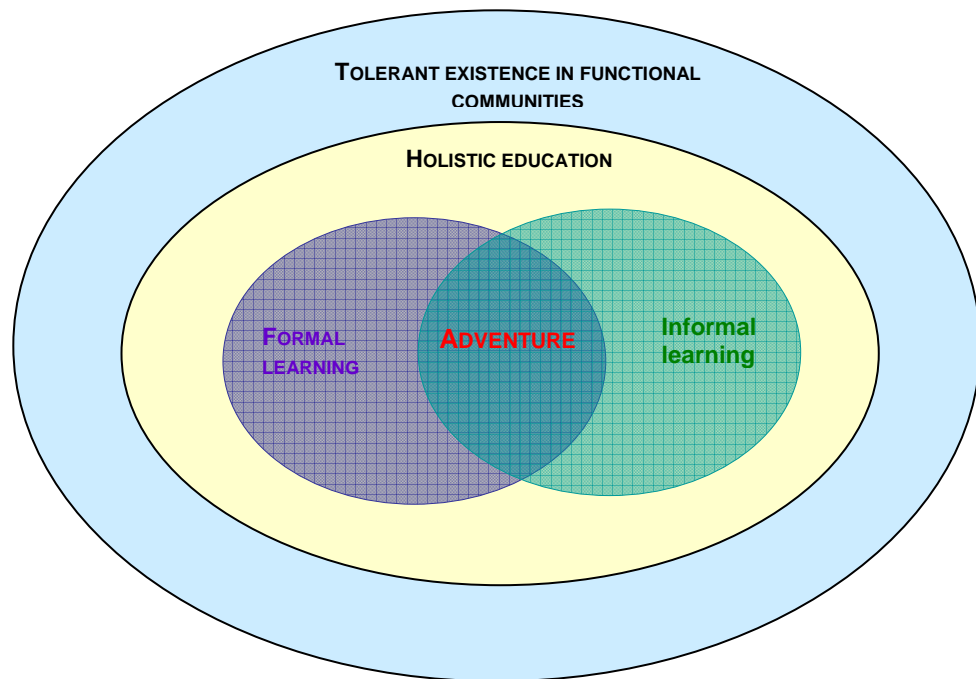


Figure 7: Holistic education through adventure

The diagram shows how adventure sits at the cusp of both formal and informal learning, enabling the individual to exist competently and confidently. Formal learning provides the knowledge to attain the product outcomes on which professions rely. Not all can achieve the highest level of attainment and therefore, by natural selection, society maintains a balance of individuals to make it function. Informal learning provides the process that enables people to learn about themselves and how to exist and work alongside others. The relationship of adventure to both formal and informal learning is one of a common tool of engagement, able to meet objectives within both frameworks and deliver to both product and process objectives “to reveal hidden potential in young people” (Cramp 2008:173):

People who understand themselves more fully and relate to others more effectively (Priest & Gass 2005:19).

Adventure is unique and powerful in its ability to excite and challenge, in the way it brings people out of their comfort zone and in the way it brings people to think differently. Each adventure challenge brings an opportunity for personal learning and provides chances to communicate with and learn about others, be that other

cultures, working with others, or trying other ways of achieving a goal. Adventure exists within a planned framework where participants achieve, recognise their achievement and feel that they have earned it in the face of challenge and risk.

## 2.8 Adventure and risk – a safety framework

Within adventure, value or cost effectiveness cannot be allowed to compromise safety. The principle mechanism of quality assurance within the adventure field is national regulation. Protecting participants from harm encompasses individual adventure workers and the practice of delivery. This is encased in the Authority within a framework of overall safety that looks to safeguard the welfare of participants.

The deaths of two girls in 2002 highlighted the lack of systematic control over the employment of adults associated with young people. Any adventure worker applying for a paid or voluntary position that involves working with young people or vulnerable adults has been required since 2002 to apply for a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check, which is a third party verification and report on the criminal records of the person in question. The system identifies information held on the Police National Computer (PNC) concerning convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings. On receipt of the check, the decision (and responsibility) of whether to employ the applicant rests with the employer. Vilified as time-consuming, costly and fallible, the system remains alone in its endeavour to ensure an individual working with young people is appropriate. The system, however, has created a confused situation, where draconian guidelines by organisations fearful of prosecution bring adventure workers to fear misinterpretation of their actions, even in the interests of safety (Kinchin & McGuines 2011). In terms of adventure, the risk element is real. By placing participants in the outdoors, they are placed into a much less controlled (and controllable) environment than enabled in

the classroom or the youth centre. This brings with it fear of injury, and litigation, with state intervention almost inevitably following:

The difficulty with health and safety legislation is that we are trying to create a society where risk is eliminated, but no such thing is possible (Hart 2010).

The environment alone presents many more dangers, even before the nature of the activity is taken into consideration.

The removal of all risk within adventure activities would not only be educationally undesirable, but would also be very difficult to guarantee (Thomas & Raymond 1998:257).

Much of the risk should be perceived rather than real, a result of careful instructor planning that places participants in unfamiliar environments and situations, rather than in the path of actual, physical hazard.

The most important risks in adventure education are the risks involved in experiments in self concept (Nichols 2000:126).

A previous lack of regulation and monitoring has now been replaced with a clear system of control. Regulation originally relied upon common sense and good practice. Despite five participants and an instructor dying in Scotland in the 'Cairngorm disaster' of 1971, it was not until 1993 that reform appeared, when four participants died in a kayak incident whilst participating in an adventure programme in Lyme Bay. The subsequent enquiry saw the prosecution of the Managing Director of the adventure centre through which the participants were engaged in the activities. This was the first such occurrence in Britain and prompted calls for regulation. In April 1996, the Adventure Activities Licensing Scheme (AALS) was launched, making (renewable) licences and regular external inspections (similar to the principles of Ofsted) compulsory for those organisations that charge for the delivery of adventure services to participants aged under 18 years. Schools and voluntary organisations remain exempt from licensing when undertaking

delivery themselves in respect of their own participants, but local authority youth provisions and external (independent, private) providers are not.

The aim of adventure activities licensing is to provide assurances to the public about the safety of those activity providers who have been granted a licence (HSE 2007:6)

It is essential for “all to have confidence in the standards” (DCSF 2005:8). All adventure instructors are required to hold National Governing Body (NGB) qualifications and remain active and up-to-date in their elected activity. Similarly, adventure organisations must demonstrate a robust framework of delivery, monitoring and safety. This applies as much to local authorities as to external organisations. The Authority adventure provider, however, is simultaneously subject to the regulation and monitoring of its public structure and to the controls of the public purse. However, licensing only assures adherence to safety guidelines and good management practice at the point of inspection; it is no measure of quality. Ultimately, the inspector, although experienced and qualified in the field, makes a judgement as to competence of the provider and their compliance with law.

Competence in adventure activities derives from a balance of personal experience (trial and error and learning from errors) and related training (DfE 2002a:7).

Various support resources have been developed in the years since the introduction of regulation, for example External Visits Coordinators (EVCs) becoming required in schools, along with an Outdoor Education Adviser being appointed within local authorities (DfE 2002). The delivery of quality adventure experiences does not happen by accident and, in an increasingly litigious society, bureaucratic manifestations are increasingly abundant, however misguided:

Over a 10-year period, only 364 legal claims were tabled because of children injured at school, and only half of those cases ended in any kind of payment (Hart 2010).

The Team complies with “Standards for LEAs in Overseeing Educational Visits” (DfES 2003), which places responsibility on the Authority for risk assessment and prior approval for educational visits. However time-consuming and arduous it may be for the adventure workers and group leaders running the adventure programmes, the network of parental consent forms and approval systems has created a safety framework around participants. Government support for outdoor learning was reinforced by Ofsted, which reported that participation and achievement benefited significantly from activities outside the classroom (Ofsted 2004, 2008). The later report went on to highlight how the “hard to motivate” (Ofsted 2008) can be engaged but that the full benefits are not being reaped because activities remain irregular and not an integral part of long-term curriculum planning.

Self-regulation proved unreliable when delivering to young people, who may or may not appreciate the ramifications of the activities. When working with young people, the instructor has to appreciate the psychology of those to whom they are delivering.

## 2.9 Understanding the participants

This research centres upon a Team located within the Youth Service of a local authority. Within youth work, young people are recognised as unique individuals, with rights, responsibilities and opinions; they are encouraged to articulate and participate in the specification of provisions for them. It is recognised that “childhood is entitled to special care and assistance” (UN 1989:1). The overarching rights of young people are enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN 1989):

The Convention applies to all children, whatever their race, religion or abilities; whatever they think or say,

whatever type of family they come from (UNICEF 1989).

In Britain, the Children Acts are the legislative framework for young people and embody the Convention (UN 1989). The Children Act 1908 laid the groundwork for the State owing a duty of care to young people. Some substantial changes were introduced in 2004, setting out the transformation to realise the vision of 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children' (DfES 2003):

Good parenting involves caring for children's basic needs, keeping them safe and protected, being attentive and showing them warmth and love, encouraging them to express their views and consistently taking these views into account, and providing the stimulation needed for their development and to help them achieve their potential, within a stable environment where they experience consistent guidance and boundaries (DCSF 2010).

The youth work principle of working with rather than on young people allies with the adventure concept of challenge by choice, participants impelled not compelled to participate, able to withdraw or decline an offer to engage if they so wish. This gives them ownership over the engagement, empowering them to make an informed choice. To do this, the young person must be open to learning; "the primary condition is motivation. It seems to be the crux" (Walsh & Golins 1996). Adair suggests that:

Motives are necessary for action but not sufficient in themselves. For action to happen a decision has to be made or the will engaged (Adair 1996:19).

The decision to engage thus combines with motive to form motivation. For motivation to exist, participants have to believe in themselves and their ability to achieve, and the learning has to have relevance to them personally, coming from the "process of conscious critical engagement and committed self-reflection" (Young 2005:86) that are reflective learning. The introduction (briefing) to the activity is fundamental in building anticipation and appreciative facilitation (Greenaway 2004) by the adventure worker maintains the motivation

to persevere when the adventure challenge becomes difficult. To maximise outcomes, the adventure worker must balance (perceived) risk with competence (see Figure 8). The higher the level of risk at low competency, the less success can be achieved; the greater the degree of competency, the less risk is apparent and the achievements become more self-actualising (Maslow 1943).



Figure 8: The Adventure Paradigm (Priest & Gass 2005:50)

The diagram highlights how competence and (perceived) level of risk bring about the quality of the experience. The adventure session should sit between the 'Peak adventure' and 'Exploration and experimentation' sectors, as the individual moves from initial experience to self-directed learning. It could be said the Figure shows the interaction of the individual with their environment, as competence is an individual concept concerning personal capacity, mood and skill and risk is an environmental concept concerning the environment, the challenge and the complexity of the challenge. The maximisation of outcomes can only come through prior planning in co-ordination with the group leader, the person who knows the

participants best and who can help the worker develop a targeted and progressional programme.

## 2.10 Conclusion

Through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN 1989), young people of many nations (including Britain) have enshrined rights to a safe, effective and extensive upbringing with opportunities to develop into inspired adults, able to lead fulfilled, motivated lives. Adventure has the capacity to facilitate this through holistic learning, allowing personal and social education whilst supporting the teaching of the classroom (DfES 2006). It is in the interests of the sustained development of the nation to engage every mechanism that will employ all modes of learning (Honey & Mumford 1982, Kolb 1984), thereby maximising the opportunity to achieve potential and strive towards self-actualisation as a lifelong endeavour (Longworth 2004). The adventure worker is a role model in this process, building a positive relationship with participants that will inspire them to be all that they can and to support self-realisation. By cultivating the young to satisfy their more complex needs (Maslow 1943), a more democratic worldview (Creswell 2003) becomes natural as individuals accept themselves and others as unique and worthy, unencumbered by the inhibitions and perceptions of others (Rogers 1959). People of all ages have the same need for emotional fulfilment; by understanding their own needs and triggers, the adventure worker is better able to support the young person.

A professional delineation of the adventure worker is enhanced and supported by a vocational inclination. To achieve positive progression, the session must be built within a framework that demonstrates safety (HSE 2007), deliberate planning, executing and reviewing to enable transferable learning (Priest & Gass 2005). Used appropriately, adventure is far more than a recreational outlet, it has the capacity to transform lives and build social harmony, thereby moving society towards a more aware and tolerant existence and



improved national welfare. Drawing together all the aspects explored throughout the literature review enables the development of the underpinnings of a conceptual framework of the elements that comprise a successful Team within a local authority structure (see Figure 9).



Figure 9: The conceptual framework of an Adventure Team within a local authority structure

The study of the literature enabled the researcher to form an understanding of the nature and capacity of each element of the framework; the range of elements identified through the literature review combine to create the framework for the gathering and analysis of data. The appropriate means to do this is established through the consideration and determination of the Research Methodology, which explores the process of how the research study will be conducted.

## Chapter 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Introduction

This research gained an insight into an Authority Adventure Team, using data gained over the three-month period between October and December 2009. The data acquired was then used to analyse performance against a relationship between adventure (outdoor learning), youth work (informal learning) and education (formal learning), derived as a conceptual framework through the literature. Knowledge was gained through the vicarious experiences of the adventure workers, managers, group leaders and young people, bringing their voices together (Allison & Pomeroy 2000). It was always considered essential to enable lived experiences to shape the findings. Broadly, lived experience is the practice of living, a phenomenological notion that researchers explore to “develop a deeper insight into the substantive issue” (Nyabadza & Nkomo 2011), looking to discover how people think as opposed to what they are. Although individuals do not live in isolation from one another, their interactions and encounters are not uniformly understood and interpreted: “the world is actively and creatively interpreted” (Knights & Willmott 1999:71) in “a movement of endless search with each new phenomenon” (Sadala & Adorno 2001:287). In research terms, establishing lived experiences is derived through the personal input of individuals as well as the researcher witnessing the interactions; existence is a combination of “complex personal and political dynamics” (Knights & Willmott 1999:17) and the way in which the individual perceives their existence in the world and the way in which that existence is externally perceived are subjective interpretations that must be considered. It is essential in developing ‘knowledge’ in the workplace to establish the connection between theoretical understanding and professional practice, balancing lived experience with expectation, thus the role of the insider researcher becomes a critical bridge (Drake & Heath 2010:74).

By diagrammatising the process (see Figure 10), the researcher could develop an action plan to distinguish aspects that influence the research design and ensure a high degree of integrity in executing the research:

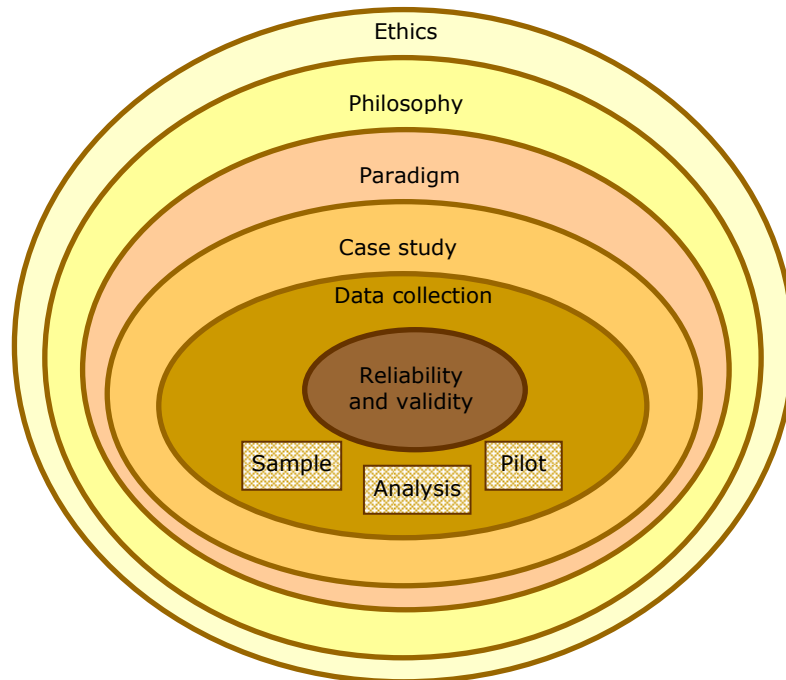


Figure 10: The inter-related elements of the research

The figure is individual to the researcher to enable the visualisation of interconnection of all the elements and to place them into a structure for inclusion. Another researcher may develop a different construct of understanding, as this is the basis of interpretivism, which advocates that natural and social realities are different and should be recognised as such. Interpretive research, as this study, is shaped by the researcher's historical and environmental existence, guided by the researcher's "set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied" (Denzin & Lincoln 2006:22). The interpretivist stance required the researcher to define their personal perception before developing the framework of the study. For this researcher, surrounding the whole study is their ethical stance (values), as this is the basis of the researcher's existence as a moral being and therefore this appears as the encasement to the whole. Having considered their ethical position, the researcher saw

their philosophy as being a critical step in the methodological design because this defined how the assumptions of the researcher would affect the study; philosophy shapes the paradigm and consequently the approach that the researcher takes. Once the approach was determined, data collection methods could be agreed, of which the sampling strategy, piloting and analysis are a part. At the heart of the study sit reliability and validity, as these define the extent to which the study achieves its goals and may be subsequently repeated (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2008, Gray 2009). Researchers are humans, therefore emotional, inconsistent and subjective; each may prefer to adopt a different approach or draw a different conclusion to those of this researcher (Guba & Lincoln 1994, Denzin & Lincoln 2005). Visualising the study in the way presented in Figure 10 helped the researcher shape the research academically and professionally and guide the structure of the chapter.

### 3.2 The ethics of research

Ethical practices are crucial facets of research that demonstrate the researcher is working in a way that is “open, honest and does no harm to the participants and others” (Lee 2009:145). Ethics is about morality; ethical conduct entails acting with integrity and taking responsibility for the process and conclusions derived. Lee (2009) describes ethics as

A set of rules or guidelines, which influence behaviour on a societal and individual basis. They underpin notions of what is right or wrong (Lee 2009:144).

The University of Derby 2007 ethical research guidelines demand respect for the “rights of others who are directly or indirectly affected by the research” (University of Derby Research Office 2007:3). To treat participants with respect may seem a “basic tenet of civilised behaviour” (Walliman 2006:147), but the drive towards outcomes can sometimes blind a researcher. This study engaged participants of different hierarchical positions; each has a different expectation in

terms of language and attitude, but the concept of respect goes beyond courtesy. It concerns a wider deference, the civility of acknowledging different opinions, beliefs and experiences in a non-judgemental manner, treating the questions and concerns of participants without bias and behaving as a researcher in the manner proclaimed in the consent agreement. In a professional doctoral context, there are ethical considerations different to those of the researcher in the way that data may be gathered or used and how research findings may be perceived or circulated. Gaining the ethical balance of researcher and professional entail the same aspects, but in the professional context, the individual has to exist in the organisation beyond the borders of their research study. The Nuremberg Code (1947) was the first document of its kind to enshrine the rights of subjects in research and formed the basis for subsequent guidelines of research ethics:

Whatever the specific nature of their work, social researchers must take into account the effects of the research on participants, and act in such a way as to preserve their dignity as human beings (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2008:58)

Although this was an independent study, it was based within a particular organisation and the Senior Management Team showed interest in the findings. As research participants were to be accessed from within the organisation, the initial ethical step was to notify the Head of Service of the Youth Service with a plan of the research and gain consent to proceeding, as well as periodically updating on progress and ultimately disseminating findings. The organisation would gain from the research findings through the analysis of the Team as this may be used to inform future practice and direction, consequently benefiting the adventure workers through developing practice. Ultimately, this would benefit participants through more informed delivery.

Throughout this study, there was an awareness the young people were of varying ages, experiences and confidence levels; ethics, when the research involves children and vulnerable people, are especially important (McNiff & Whitehead 2006:86). As mature adults, the managers, adventure workers and group leaders were more aware of their rights as individuals and some possibly would have been more confident to challenge the process, decline to answer or even stop the interview or observation altogether if they felt it lacked integrity. Lack of life experience often brings a lack of confidence and the interviewees may have felt compelled to continue, even if they had felt uncomfortable. To retain integrity, the researcher had to establish a moral code from the outset to which adherence was unquestioned and unwavering. Unethical research behaviour could arise in any of the three data collection techniques; it may include lying to participants (for example agreeing not to include certain data in the analysis and then using it), selecting particular participants to skew the data, deliberately misrepresenting oneself (for example not informing participants of participant observation or being clear of the aim of an interview), setting people up (deliberately creating a situation or phrasing a question to elicit a pre-determined response), using adversarial interviewing techniques (appearing aggressive, making participants fearful or imposing particular responses), misrepresenting or misquoting participants or intentionally falsifying data to achieve a particular outcome. Although the ethics of research rest on the moral fortitude of the researcher, "the basic concept in qualitative research is trust" (Boeije 2010:44); many of the issues of ethical conduct can be resolved through thorough planning:

All researchers will be aiming at the principle of 'informed consent', which requires careful preparation involving explanation and consultation before any data collecting begins (Bell, 2005:45).

Informed consent is “the bedrock of ethical procedure” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2008:52) and entailed the potential participant and, where appropriate, parents or guardians, being aware of the research and all potential purposes for which their input may be used. This was in written form, with details of the aims and the research process being provided, explaining what would happen to the research notes and research findings. In this research, participants over the age of 16 were able to consent in their own right to take part, as this was the policy of the Youth Service, with clear informed consent from parents or guardians being sought for potential participants under this age. This was not intended to undermine young people, but to ensure that they could not be exploited in any way. It is a foundation of ethical conduct in youth work to value and encourage young people’s “rights to make their own choices and decisions” (NYA 2004). This included being free to withdraw from the research, irrespective of any consent given by parents or guardians:

[Participants] are not objects of enquiry or somehow subordinate. They are research equals (McNiff & Whitehead 2006:85).

A signed ‘contract’ with the interviewees was then secured, stating aims for the research and intended use of data and findings. The same contract was provided to all participants, whatever their age or position. Prior to each interview the contract was revisited and discussed to ensure that all the participants understood and agreed to it and were participating in full knowledge of the research (Silverman 2006, Hancock & Algozzine 2006, Denzin & Lincoln 2003, Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007). As a means of “respondent validation” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007:66) (“member checking” Stake 1995:115), following each interview the participants were provided with a written transcript that they were asked to verify as an accurate record. In order to concentrate fully on the participant input, make supplementary field notes and have accurate, consistent access to the data subsequently, the interviews were almost all digitally

recorded. This enabled the material to be revisited later and the same inflections and emphases of the initial conversation to be accessible, avoiding potential reinterpretation or misinterpretation. Stake takes issue with focussing on 'word for word' transcription:

Getting the exact words of the respondent is usually not very important; it is what they mean that is important (Stake 1995:66).

He highlights how participants often dislike reading "the inelegance of their own sentences" (1995:66). Although exact transcription, with all its hesitations and verbal time filling, is time consuming, it was considered essential as a means to confirm meaning and participants were asked to return a signed copy of the transcription. The interviews with young people were not recorded digitally, but were written at the time of the interview. This was for the purely practical reason that some of the young people would not be accessible beyond the day of their interview to the researcher. In addition, the young people expressed a preference for the encounter to be a single event, rather than them having to try to read the transcript and get a verified copy back to the researcher. The young people read through and signed the written version at the end of the interview. Obtaining verification of transcripts this way also ensured that participants were consenting to verbatim quotations. For both the recorded and the written transcripts, participants were offered the opportunity to add supplementary data and comments to their contribution but a part of the introductory agreement was that they could not have input removed.

A highly controversial topic within research is that of deception, whether to be honest about the aims, outcomes and uses of the research. In certain situations, this may appear desirable as people may behave differently if they know that they are under study:

You have to make a consistent effort to observe yourself and the effects you may be having (Gillham 2000:47)



Deception in research is most likely to be a problem when it causes the subjects to unknowingly expose themselves to harm (Silverman 2006:318).

Within this research, no reason was seen not to be straightforward with all participants; in fact, it was considered a strength to the data gathering to be honest as to the aims of the process. The issue of risk to the participants (malfeasance) runs core to ethical research principles (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007:58, Denzin & Lincoln 2003:217). This includes not just physical harm but also psychological effects from being involved in the research. Risk of some form is inherent in life so to say that research should involve no risks would be inappropriate. This research entailed conversation, exploring experiences through a set of guide questions. In itself this was not a risky undertaking in any physical sense, but it was potentially possible that the process of revealing experience could have aroused memories and submerged emotions, causing subsequent distress (Gray 2009:74). For all participants, there was a limited period following the encounter where they could have arranged to meet to discuss the process or their input or to add further comment, but this was in the knowledge that no responses may be essentially changed or deleted.

Ethically the research needed to remain neutral, non-judgemental and supportive, with the researcher aware that body language and verbal interjections were important; reformulating sentences, repeating what the person said or simply by picking a word or sentence and repeating it would have influenced how the participant related to the interviewer (Holstein & Gubrium 2006). During this research, the interviewer needed to be prepared to be led by the participant (whether adult or young person), following their cues and recognising reluctance to respond as opposed to pausing for thought. The framing of questions and the time provided for answering needed to be such that the participant was free to answer in their own words and of their own meaning, without the interviewer being directive:

However reflexive the individual researcher tries to be, they still remain unaware of some of the effects of their appearance, their behaviour and their reactions on the dynamics of the interview (Kay, Cree, Tisdall & Wallace 2003:14).

People are changeable beings, whose lives are "laced with social discourses and power relations, which do not remain constant over time" (Riessmann 1993:65). People are influenced by their environment and their engagement with others, shaping their perceptions, memories and opinions with their prevailing state:

People do not deal with the world event by event or with text sentence by sentence. They frame events in larger structures (Brunner 1990:64).

Hence, the data collection was scaled within a relatively short timeframe so that the prevailing mood and perceptions were captured to develop the desired image. The power dynamic between researcher and participant (Carmody 2001) had a vital influence on the quality, nature and substance of the data. Relationships "do not take place in a vacuum" (Dallos & Miell 1996:151) but are affected by location, circumstance and history. The researcher was also ultimately an employee of the organisation and therefore the research could have been affected by the relationship with participants, had the researcher not been aware of this and taken great care to ensure a clear distinction between the working and the research roles. The research endeavoured to achieve an informal, positive environment in which the participants felt relaxed and comfortable, able to respond openly, safe within a trusting relationship bounded by confidentiality and anonymity.

The questions of anonymity and confidentiality regularly arise in research. Anonymity relates to the identity of the individual, whereas confidentiality refers to what is said. Within this research, a small selection of participants was engaged in the data collection. Despite being designed for educational purposes, the research findings are of relevance and interest to an organisation. However, the identity of

the organisation remains undisclosed as an initial step to ensuring anonymity. There was an assumption throughout that all participants would take the process seriously, providing honest input, for which they willingly would take responsibility (Denscombe 1998). Taking responsibility for input, however, does not mean that participants should be named and identifiable through the research. Given that the potential participant population in this case was relatively small, it may have become known which young people, adventure workers and managers formed the research sample. However, no names or other personal data of participants was gathered. In this way, risk of accidental identification was minimised. Anonymity was further achieved through allocating pseudonyms to the participants: the names of the participants were listed alphabetically, irrespective of 'category' (young person, manager, group leader, adventure worker), and random unisex names were allocated from a list drafted by the researcher. Moreover, any personal, identifying information is deliberately not quoted during the reporting of the findings, such as past employment of workers. Confidentiality is a separate issue. Within the data collection, "talk is *on the record* and *for the record*" (Denscombe 1998:109), what people said within the data gathering could be used within the research findings. Generally, the full details of what people said was not revealed and only formed a part of the collection of evidence to build a picture of common thematic issues, although snippets were used to form quotes. Having established an informal environment, participants became relaxed and openly discussed thoughts, feelings and experiences, and talked of issues not directly inputting into the research. The researcher came into possession of possibly intimate input, potentially damaging or embarrassing to the participant. The environment thus had to establish trust between participant and researcher.

No participant made a disclosure of a safeguarding concern, had this occurred there would have been a duty incumbent to report it further.

This fact was made known to all participants at the time of starting the research data gathering. The interview process entailed a one-to-one meeting between researcher and participant. This raised a concern of safeguarding and best practice, as under local authority guidelines, an adventure worker should not be alone with a young person. The researcher endeavoured to resolve this through ensuring that the date and time of the interview were known by other adventure workers and by the parents of the young person and these were adhered to by the researcher, and the interviews were always scheduled for times when other adventure workers were around the interview venue.

### *3.2.1 The researcher as adventure practitioner*

The researcher was concerned to ensure that the research remained as ethically sound during the analysis stage as through the data gathering stage. It is essential to researcher integrity to maintain a neutral standpoint when examining input and drawing conclusions, as potentially these could conflict with the researcher's own position:

There are no easy or quick-fix solutions for ethical issues and each research project brings its own potential hazards that the researcher has to deal with (Boeije 2010:55).

The ideal position for a researcher is to remain completely neutral, objectively analysing data. However, it has to be acknowledged that one cannot divorce oneself from the research entirely, as a human being; one has thoughts, feelings and opinions. The researcher engaged in an examination of their own organisation, existing in two "communities of practice" (Wenger 1998) that generate "situated learning" (Lave & Wenger 1991), cultivating new ways of thinking and doing, resulting in the improvement of professional practice. The core concept of this is that individual learning must develop within a framework of social influence, which itself is embedded within culture. As a researcher, one draws upon the understanding, interactions and culture of the organisation; these are strengthened by the researcher

being an insider as they are pre-existing and the conclusions drawn become framed within the conceptual knowledge of the organisation. That is not to say that the insider-researcher will always draw conclusions supporting the organisation position, but their conclusions are developed within an appreciation of the environment of the organisation:

Expressed in terms of deeper understanding of professional practices and processes, and the ability to consider centralised intervention from an informed perspective (Drake & Heath 2010:96).

This emphasises a strength to being an “insider researcher” (Drake 2010), as the researcher can bring their knowledge and experience from one field into the other, as “complete members of their organisations” (Coghlan 2003:451):

The subjectivity of the researcher [which] remains, as in all sciences, a potential influence on the knowledge claims that are made (Oakley 1998:723)

Equally, being an insider-researcher enables personal development as both an academic and a practitioner, as deliberately placing oneself and one’s ideas into the research reflexion (Drake & Heath 2010:20); in itself, this can assist in the development of the organisation and the achievement of its goals. Being a practitioner-researcher brings with it an existing range of relationships and interactions, the participants have a history with the insider researcher and therefore have opinions that they cannot shed prior to participation, and they may even have a pre-conceived opinion of the research. Researchers often “choose their project as a result of several years of experience” (Drake 2010:98) and therefore cannot, and do not intend to, bring pure objectivity to bear. Glesne and Peshkin see subjectivity as a strong positive in research design and support the embedded nature of the researcher in the study:

My subjectivity is the basis for the story that I am able to tell. It is a strength on which I build (Glesne & Peshkin 1992:104).

Having subjectivity should not be considered a weakness of the findings. Being an insider researcher “does not, of itself, make the data any richer” (Mercer 2007:9) but it does bring benefits in certain aspects of the study, such as access, reduction in intrusiveness and rapport. It also brings an understanding of the context of social relations, hierarchies, culture, situations and events with which an outsider researcher may struggle. It is a “double-edged sword” (Mercer 2007) that is the “great strength and fundamental weakness” (Rajendran 2001:3) of a qualitative approach as the insider researcher gains in “extensive and intimate knowledge of the culture” but may be lost in “myopia and their inability to make the familiar strange” (Hawkins 1990:417). The researcher in this study was professionally based within the Team and the study itself was intended as the first stage of Team development; the study therefore had to be mindful of this and the conclusions drawn in this context. The first step in dealing with subjectivity is to recognise its potential drawbacks and remain mindful of it throughout. From there, it is in the measures to ensure validity and to provide reliability that the subjectivity of the researcher to enhance the findings becomes authenticated. The researcher considered their position of being an insider researcher as empowering to the study. The position of being a practitioner as well as the researcher enabled the conclusions and the depiction of the Team to be enhanced by the greater empathy and awareness this brought, by adding context and understanding and the meaning derived from it.

### 3.3 A philosophical approach to research

All research is based on assumptions about how the world is perceived and how one can best come to understand it. To make sense of the contextual framework of the research, it is essential to develop an understanding of the way that knowledge exists for adventure, to appreciate the way that participants are brought to their knowledge and to realise how adventure, as a learning medium,

does not exist in isolation. It has to be recognised, however, that reality and knowledge are individual, personal concepts, there cannot be an absolute truth because everyone has an individual life experience and a unique interpretation of that experience: a unique narrative. Two adventure experiences or two pieces of research data into an adventure experience cannot ever be fully corroborated, as each is exclusive and inimitable, "objective reality can never be captured" (Denzin & Lincoln 2005:5), but the multiple nature of the realities may be acknowledged and the commonalities affirmed.

As Morgan and Smircich (1980:493) say: "different world views ... imply different grounds for knowledge". Subjectivity, knowledge and experience define the underlying worldview (Creswell 2003) of the researcher. The nature and extent of these, in turn, shape the way that the researcher approaches and constructs the research, and the nature of the conclusions that they eventually draw (Allison and Pomeroy 2000). Knowledge is the amalgamation of that which one believes to be factual and that which actually is true in the mind and life of the individual. However, in turn, that which one believes to be factual is strongly impacted by the way in which one views the world, hence knowledge is bounded by that which one construes as real. Reality, or rather, the individual's conception of reality, is embedded within their unique contextualisation of their environment and experiences, and the way that these have combined to enable the individual to become the person that they are, with their specific outlook on the world. The researcher developed Figure 11 to understand the notion of knowledge and one's understanding of it. One's epistemology (individual knowledge and how one knows it) is embedded in personal beliefs and how one understands this as conforming to being factual in relation to them and their analysis of the world. This in turn is built up from the life experience, understanding and feelings that form the personality and

interpretation of the individual (their ontology) and comprise the basis of their reading of an event, situation, experience or encounter.

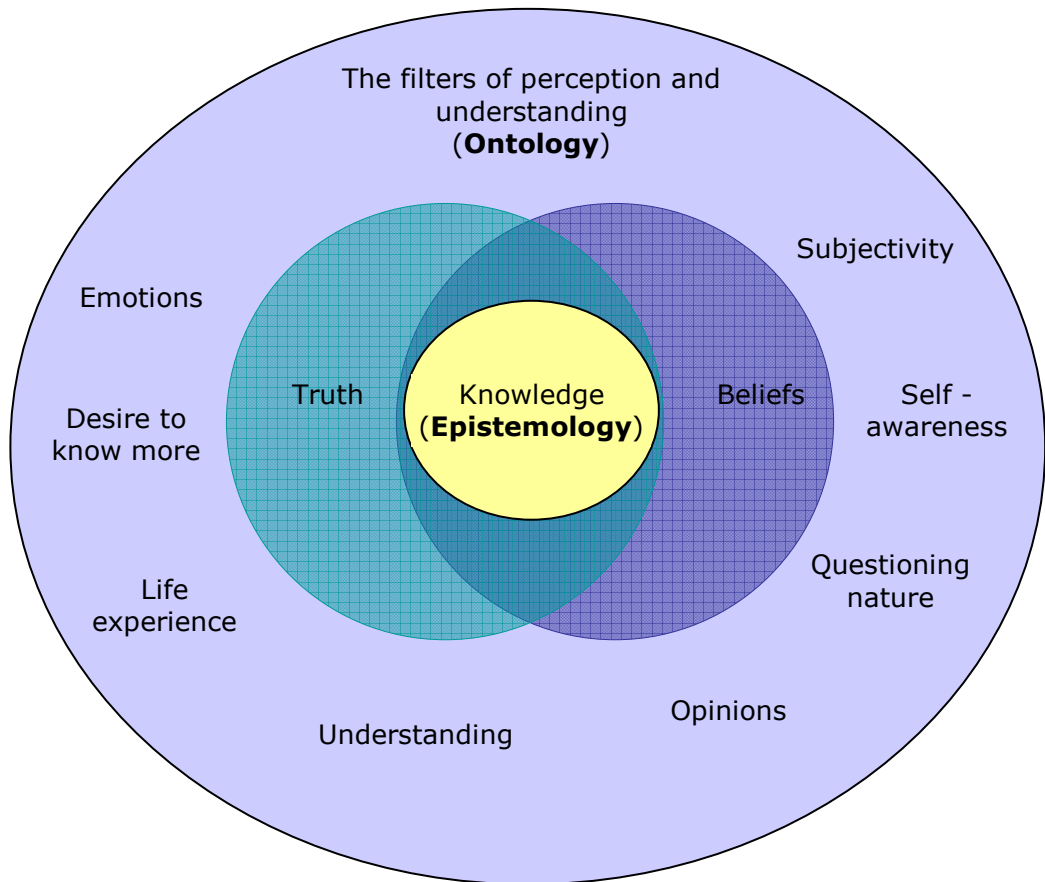


Figure 11: Epistemology is shaped by ontology

The nature of reality is addressed through ontology, the filters through which one sees and experiences the world. This applies not only to the way in which the researcher constructs the research and analyses the data, but also in the way in which the participants locate themselves within the world. Adventure fosters learning (knowing) through experience, through the combining of doing and reflecting: the essence of Dewey's philosophy of learning (Dewey 1938). Epistemology is the study of knowledge and its distinction from opinion; it is the proving of what individuals *actually* know as opposed to what they *believe* they know. Without some means of understanding how one acquires knowledge, how one relies upon their senses and how one develops concepts, there is no coherent framework for thinking. This research is constructed around the



epistemology and ontology of adventure, the nature of knowledge and reality, as they exist within the world of adventure. For the participants engaging with this Team, the learning process is realist. Their reality is very much their present existence – the sights and sounds of the outdoors, the emotional, psychological and physical reality of the activity, their interactions with their group and the associated risk and consequences to which they are committing themselves. Their knowledge is a construct of their experiences, the summation of their skill acquisition, competence development and affective progression. Their learning is in how they interpret and absorb this knowledge into their normative behaviour and how this becomes part of their narrative (transferable learning): “the truth is about what works rather than what is” (Allison & Pomeroy 2000:92).

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2008) consider human nature alongside ontology and epistemology as part of the definition of social reality. Human nature is the interaction of humans with their environment, a very real consideration for adventure participants. At the objectivist, positivist end of the scale is mechanistic determinism, where humans respond unthinkingly to their environment, conforming to Rogers’ (1959) notion of conditional positive regard. At the subjectivist, constructivist end of the scale, individuals are “initiators of their own actions with free will and creativity” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2008:8): unconditional positive regard (Rogers 1959).

Epistemology is bounded by the limitations of human understanding in the questioning of how people know what they know. The epistemology of the participants engaging in adventure is different to that of the adventure worker, purely on the basis that everyone knows something different and everyone takes something different from their session. The execution of an adventure session is the fundamental basis in establishing what will be learnt and for how long. The delivery of adventure sessions is based upon incremental (progressional) learning. Participants may be presented with

challenges that they have to overcome or activities that they have never tried. Their learning comes from working through that with which they are faced. There is always an underlying emphasis on relationships, both those within a group (interpersonal) and that with themselves (intrapersonal). The epistemology of the adventure worker is bounded in their absorption into the field of adventure. Their knowledge is based in their experiences of the activities, but framed within the remainder of their life experiences. Both participants and adventure workers are engaged in the relationship and have an important role in establishing its nature, the extent of freedom each party within the relationship has to commit to it, develop it and progress (learn) through it. Empirical epistemologies are directive and follow a behaviourist path, ignoring personal experience and conscious thought ("banking education" (Freire 1996), for example, school physical education lessons using adventure. Participants remain dependent, as knowledge is framed as indirect, absolute, isolated truth, for example in the compartmentalisation of school subjects. This brings a divided understanding of the world, where young people cannot relate the reality that they are given in the classroom with the reality of the world they witness and experience outside school. The system reduces the complexity of the world for the convenience of delivering the learning, but is "at the expense of an integrated understanding of the world" (Nicol 2003:15). Taster sessions take a more cognitive path, allowing a greater level of rational thought, analysis and recall because the focus is on "the procedures used to absorb and remember information" (Priest & Gass 2005:14). Young people are encouraged to link new knowledge, new skills and new experiences to things that they already know. The full benefit of adventure is realised through extended experiential learning, when participants are able to engage, reflect and then re-engage. Reasoning and awareness link with behaviour and perceptive thought to allow the

participants to reflect on their experience and absorb it more deeply into their (sub)consciousness: libertarian education (Freire 1996). The adventure worker exists at the experiential end of the spectrum; participants would normally begin at the behaviourist end and, one hopes, would be progressed by their engagement towards the experiential. The adventure engagement is a learning opportunity for the participants if they are led adequately and appropriately through their experience. The engagement can also be a learning experience for the adventure worker, if they are prepared to allow it to be so, to open themselves up to the engagement, acknowledging their function to be an opportunity for self-development and a learning experience.

Within the epistemological framework, reality can exist on a range of levels, or in a range of ways. Reality is the practical, physical certainty of the adventure engagement, the level at which most participants will begin their experience and their relationship with adventure. Beyond this, however, are more nebulous, cerebral levels, where the nature of the reality becomes more entrenched in the 'every day' of the young person, thus more meaningful and ultimately transferable. Nicol (2003) talks of a spiritual reality, moments of clarity and intuitive understanding where there is a sense of "oneness with self, others and the environment" (Nicol 2003:12). In adventure, such moments are found when the individual feels a unity, a connection and a re-engagement with nature. This is the highest level of reality, an enlightenment that makes sense of the experiences and understandings that have brought the individual to that point. Such ethereal moments "when we forget ourselves and seem to become part of all being" (Zander & Zander 2000: 20) are, however, ephemeral and uncommon, yet they inspire the individual. Not all adventure experiences will be so divine, but all will have an emotional effect that has to be recognised. Reason (1998) acknowledges the levels of reality in his four-point model of epistemology, a model that reflects excellently that which is named in

adventure 'experiential learning' and is resonated in the models of Honey and Mumford (1982) and Kolb (1984). Reason's (1998) epistemological model highlights the levels of reality that occur for participants in adventure. At the lowest level, there is the actual, physical engagement with the activity. If there is no reflective element built into the session, the experience remains at this level and the young person is not moved beyond it. Knowledge thus remains basic, specific and transient. The reflection that emanates from an adventure session founded on learning principles moves the young person on to the next step, on to understanding and internalising the experience, relating it to that which they already know and understand. The fourth level moves to self-actualisation (Maslow 1943), the self-directed transference and application of the knowledge gained by the young person into their own world.

CONTENT REMOVED FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS

*Reason, P. (1998) A Participatory World. Resurgence 167 42-44* <http://www.livedlearning.net/basicphilo.htm>

*Honey, P. & Mumford, A. (1982) Typology of Learners from Manual of Learning Styles London: P. Honey* <http://www.learningandteaching.info/learning/experience.htm> (11.11.09).

*Kolb, D.A. (1984) Experiential Learning: Experience as the source for learning and development. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc.*

Figure 12: Reason's 1998 epistemological model resonates in Honey & Mumford (1982) and Kolb (1984)

A philosophy espoused by Heidegger (Quay 2004) is that knowing is embedded in doing and that this knowing manifests itself more deeply with time. Quay (2004) emphasises the two ways of knowing – knowing *how* and knowing *that*. Knowing *how* comes from doing, it is working through the challenge or trying the new activity, whereas knowing *that* comes from reflective thinking and understanding the underlying reasoning. Uniting the two brings about reflexion, the absorption and application of new learning on a habitual basis. However, it is not simply time that brings about the progression from knowing *how* to knowing *that* but the combination of sustained opportunities to engage and the support to reflect, internalise and understand. Participants learn new skills, try new activities or work on challenges and they may achieve their goals, but without having the opportunity and guidance to reflect on what they have done, the learning has little impact, little transferability and is short-lived. In addition, adventure may use a practical medium but it has an emotional effect, either simply at the level of liking or disliking the adventure experience or through to the level of being inspired to want to engage more. Engaging with adventure can be a conduit to further knowledge; it recognises and embraces different ways of knowing (hence different ways of learning). The individual can be moved to want to know more about or to progress more within the specific activity of the engagement, or to want to learn something related; for example, the weather during a particular activity may bring a wish to learn about clouds, an expedition may bring a desire to learn about plants or bird calls, an incident may bring a wish to learn about the medical capacity of plants. The challenge of the adventure worker is to frame the experience within an understanding that encapsulates the everyday lives and environment of the participants in such a way that they are moved towards spiritual inspiration.

Within this specific research, epistemology was identified through questioning and observing. The adventure workers, the managers, the group leaders and the participants were asked about their understanding, their knowledge, their experiences and the impact of these. However, with young people the experience and training of a youth worker had to come to bear; young people often say as much with their body language, facial expressions and silences as with words. In itself, the language of young people needed to be understood; the sub-culture of youth is not always expressed in the language of adults and the experiences of the young person cannot always be easily expressed in their knowledge of language. Epistemological understanding can be harshly bounded by the limits of language and expressive ability: as the (young) person struggles to express the impact of their adventure experience, the limitation of their language and expressive ability can limit their capacity to understand their experience or the extent to which they can reflect upon it. The adult can struggle to understand that which the young person is trying to express. The task of the adventure worker is to expand their skills of expression as well as to make sense of their experience, hence to bring about an expansion of their knowledge in a range of areas (the cross-curricular nature of learning through adventure). Empathy is essential in this, in enabling the adventure worker to understand their experience and support them to express it and to relate their experience to the reality of their world, the notions of "freefall pedagogy" and "enactive inquiry" (Haskell 2000). One powerful learning episode leads to another (Dewey 1938); therefore, one meaningful adventure experience leads to another and, in this way, theory learnt in the classroom connects to practice and becomes the impetus for sustained (re-)engagement, either in the classroom or for self-directed learning (pedagogy versus andragogy (Knowles 1990). The experience of the researcher as a youth worker proved

invaluable in comprehension and translation, as well as in developing an empathic environment that would foster openness and honesty.

This research explores the epistemology and ontology of the Team, the way in which participants are brought to realise and understand their knowledge and the extent to which they are able to embrace it and transfer its use. Knowledge was gained through the narratives of the young people engaging with the activities, of their group leaders and of the adventure workers and managers of the particular local authority Team. The participants, group leaders, adventure workers and managers were interviewed to express their experiences and thoughts directly, in their own words; adventure sessions were observed that enabled the researcher to witness interaction and reaction, engagement and process. Their voices were brought together to compile a picture, defining this as a singular case study. For it to hold value, the research had to be conducted within a methodically planned framework. Such a framework is known as a paradigm, which may be defined as "a basic set of beliefs that guide action" (Creswell 2007:19). Guba and Lincoln elaborate that these beliefs are basic "in the sense that they must be accepted on faith" (Guba & Lincoln 1994:109). The construction of the research framework is the unique design of the researcher, another may adopt another design but that makes neither wrong, just different.

### 3.4 The paradigmatic choice

In this study, as in all research, the aim was to define the "appropriateness of the method to the research question" (Oakley 1998:724). The choice was initially between the two broad paradigms that guide research. Firstly, the scientific paradigm, commonly named positivist, where research is quantitative and sees the world as conforming to consistent, predictable and universal laws "enabling us to acquire some understanding at least of the apparent chaos of nature" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007:14). It is defined by scientific and logical thinking, seeking a single objective reality

that is deduced in an orderly and predictable manner. Systematic (scientific) investigation invariably (dis)proves a pre-conceived theory. The process could not be applied to this research, as the aim was to build a view rather than prove one. The principle behind quantitative research is "cause and effect thinking" (Creswell 2003:18), to be able to separate elements, so that they can be counted and modelled individually and statistically, and to remove factors that may distract or detract from the intent of the research or influence the behaviour of an element. Such a segregation of discrete factors could not be applied to the development of a view of this Team, as the view formed depended heavily on interrelationships. The result of pure quantitative research is absolute (numeric) data, which is then analysed statistically to formulate results, "summarized in terms of the constant conjunctions between observed events or objects" (Blaikie 2007:112). The outcomes sought here were neither numeric nor statistical, but a picture of relationships and processes. Remaining separate from the research emotionally is central to quantitative research, whereas an empathic researcher was a strength to this research.

This research thus draws less from the quantitative paradigm than it does the qualitative. Factual data was gathered in support of developing the picture of the Team, rather than defining it. The principal foundation of the findings is qualitative data, the perspectives of the adventure workers, the participants, the group leaders and the Authority managers, and in the participant observation of the researcher. The formation of a comparative view against a derived relationship was very much a social endeavour, an antithesis to the numeric certainty of quantitative positivism. The qualitative paradigm defines the world as individual, socially constructed and changeable, a constructivist approach in opposition to positivism's logical and regular structure. The term covers:



Any kind of research that produces findings that are not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification (Strauss & Corbin 1990:17).

In its use of social input and its intent to establish an organisational picture through inductive discovery rather than deductive proof (Gray 2009:14), this research sits very much within a qualitative (constructivist) rather than a quantitative (positivist) paradigm. The constructivist paradigm asserts the unique personal experiences of people and their personal interpretation thereof, the way they:

Construe the world in ways often similar but not necessarily the same (Bassey 1998:43).

The research adopted this “interactive and humanistic” (Creswell 2003:181) approach to gain an in-depth insight into humanistic life, a view of an Authority Team, ascribing to Weber’s *verstehen* (understanding) as opposed to *erklären* (explain) (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight 2001, Blaikie 2007), recognising the nuances of the social, as opposed to the natural world. The goal is to understand the meaning of the realities that people create for themselves (Creswell 2003) and hence the proposition is that social reality is socially constructed (Berger & Luckmann 1966). Individual reality is a natural human pursuit, grounded in personal preferences, prejudices, life experiences and emotional interpretations (Schwandt 2000:197) because understanding is a sensual exercise, refined within the mind: “multiple, intangible, mental constructions” (Guba & Lincoln 1994:11). Hence, one can never be certain of having fully understood (interpreted) transmitted intent, nor can that correlation be related to anyone else’s without discursive interaction but because knowledge is relative and personal, it is also therefore relatively valid, that is, there is no categorical truth. Reality is malleable and may alter through interaction and over time. Schwandt (2000) posits that understanding arises from conversational interaction, a process of mutual discovery. However, that can only be partially true, as a foundation of adventure learning is self-discovery; the individual

arrives at knowledge of the self as much as communal knowledge. Mutual knowledge can only be arrived at through discussion and negotiation of those aspects of learning that an individual wishes to divulge, all else remains a personal interpretation. As a researcher, the goal is to place emphasis on the participants and, through their input, find consensus within the varying interest factions, (in this case, within the different categories of participants); the researcher observes the input to understand and construct meaning, but remains external to and unaffected by it.

This study reflected more on the 'how', the culture of the Team: the value systems, attitudes, behaviour, concerns, motivations, aspirations of the participants and their "unique human capacity to make sense of their world" (Schwandt 2000:192). The research was multi-faceted in the way it explored, questioned and induced. Because of its intentional greater depth of focus, this research involved fewer people, but their input was deeper than under a quantitative design. Rather than amassing brief data from a large volume of people (the 'breadth' approach), this tactic enabled the gathering of more detailed data. The 'depth' approach was considered more appropriate to this study as the researcher was seeking a more intimate exploration of thoughts, feelings and experiences (Stake 1995:102), rather than a general overview, as well as defining the location and relationships of the Team in its professional setting. The constructivism of this research, however, tended towards a realism that is not apparent in some descriptions. Pure constructivism denies an external reality (Blaikie 2007, Gray 2009:24) that the researcher cannot deny; there is a separate reality that need not be proved to or by the researcher, such as the composition of the materials from which adventure equipment is constructed, the functioning of the bodies of the young people engaged in adventure experiences. Pure constructivism also ignores the way in which the researcher is embedded in the research (Yin

2009:71, Bassey 1999:43), how that personal knowledge and experience can support the research to produce outcomes that are more credible. This was a much more subjective research, in which the researcher brought a more personal, emotive element into the analysis:

Unlike quantitative work that can carry its meaning in its tables and summaries, qualitative work carries its meaning in its entire text (Richardson 2005:960).

The distinction between quantitative positivism and qualitative constructivism is excellently exemplified by Guba & Lincoln:

Whereas a million white swans can never establish, with complete confidence, the proposition that all swans are white, one black swan can completely falsify it (Guba & Lincoln 1994:107).

The notion advocates Popper's (1959) concept of falsification, an outlook that whilst a number of participants may advocate the quality of the Team and its learning processes, one example of doubt would nullify the picture (and vice versa). Should one participant question the learning embedded in the adventure process, the process of delivery, the outcomes attained, then the input of other data, even if it were all to the contrary, would be tempered and could not posit an absolute position. Whilst not seeking specifically to attain contradictory data, the researcher was anxious to ensure input from all potential elements comprising the Team in order to enable a balance of views. In developing a depiction of the Team, the researcher became a "bricoleur" (Denzin and Lincoln 2005:4), a person of "multiple and gendered images" weaving together a patchwork quilt from the various discrete collections of data gathered to "secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question" (Denzin & Lincoln 2005:5), that phenomenon being an understanding of the Team and its operation. Through interviews with young people and interpreting their conversations and through observing their engagement with the adventure process, a picture of their learning outcomes was formed; through conversations with group leaders,

adventure workers and managers, a construction of their motives and intents was built. The endeavour was towards polyvocality (Denzin & Lincoln 2003) and enabling a comprehensive vision, rather than the single perception of the researcher. As Maxwell (2005) points out, a view is always a view from some perspective, shaped by the worldview of the observer (Creswell 2007) and thus this research was shaped by the researcher's personal narrative. Holding a particular worldview (Creswell 2007) influences personal behaviour, professional practice and ultimately research position:

The assumptions reflect a particular stance that researchers make when they choose qualitative research. After researchers make this choice, they then further shape their research by bringing to the inquiry paradigms or worldviews (Creswell 2007:19)

Richardson describes this as a prismatic view, where "light can be both waves and particles" (Richardson 2005:963). The worldview defined that which the researcher believed they knew and affected their understanding and interpretation of the data in this research. Their belief system (worldview (Creswell 2007)) was "intrinsically linked to values" (Allison & Pomeroy 2000:93) and this underlying humanistic element only served to confirm Guba and Lincoln's assertion:

No construction is or can be incontrovertibly right; advocates of any particular construction must rely on *persuasiveness* and *utility* rather than *proof* in arguing their position (Guba & Lincoln 1994:108).

This study, as any research design, was uniquely constructed by the researcher, who must be able to justify choices in terms of practicality or efficacy, rather than being considered the only way to conduct this research.

### 3.5 Case study as the approach of choice

Having established the paradigmatic basis of the study, the researcher had to evaluate the range and elect the most appropriate approach to take. The approach is the overarching strategy of

conducting the research to answer the research questions. Within the qualitative paradigm, the researcher had a range of approaches by which to proceed: ethnography, phenomenology, case study and grounded theory. Each holds its own strengths and pertinent applicability, depending on the focus of the research study.

Ethnography emanates from anthropology, where colonial exploration looked to study entire cultures; the researcher is an observer or a participant observer (Creswell 2003). In modern research, ethnography has been broadened to include virtually any group or organisation. In an ethnographic study, there is no preset boundary to the observation and no established endpoint. The focus is on culture, which includes shared attitudes, values, norms, practices and language of the collective under study: "the shared beliefs, practices, artefacts, folk knowledge and behaviours" (Goetz and LeCompte 1984:2). This study endeavoured to achieve more than a cultural understanding; it looked to explore every aspect of adventure within the Authority. In addition, ethnographic studies have no pre-defined research questions, more a general hypothesis that becomes gradually refined. This refining of research questions adopts an iterative approach that did not align with the construct of this study in that the researcher had imposed a personal time boundary of completion within the framework of doctoral thesis requirement. This research entailed elements of ethnography but involved more than the approach offered.

Quite closely linked to ethnography is phenomenology, sometimes considered a philosophical perspective as well as a research approach. It focuses on individual subjectivity and interpretations, understanding how the world appears to others. The researcher seeks to derive thematic patterns common to a number of perspectives; this can be personal perceptions and may be related to relationships, emotions, an adventure programme, but the input is generally relevant to a singular event. Again, this research entailed

elements of phenomenology, as it sought to acquire the experiences of participants, group leaders, adventure workers and managers, but these individual perspectives were not the entirety of the study.

Another iterative approach, like ethnography, is grounded theory, developed by Glaser and Strauss in the 1960s with the purpose of developing theory from the data that the researcher collects (Creswell 2003). The theory is not an abstract conceptualisation, but rooted (grounded) in real-life observation. Through its nature of being gradually developed through gathered data, it is a complex iterative process beginning with generative, open questions to guide the researcher. The data indicates core theoretical concepts and linkages that are gradually honed into a proven theory. The character of grounded theory makes it time-consuming, which went against the researcher's ambitions. In addition, there was no theory being sought in this research, but a picture of the Team. Similar to grounded theory is the approach of action research, but this was discounted by the researcher early in the evaluation of approaches as it seeks to resolve established issues by trialling conceived solutions in an iterative process of testing and evaluating and this was not an objective of the research study.

The case study is an approach that focuses on a phenomenon, or class of phenomena (a case). It strives for depth and detail, being a fieldwork method that relies on interaction with the phenomena in order to explore and understand it. The basis of case study is to understand the phenomena from the perspective of the objectives of the study, looking to combine personal input from participants with researcher observations and secondary sources (the desktop, documentary, historical approach). The case study combines elements of ethnography and phenomenology but does not have the endurance requirement of grounded theory. The unique ability of case study to bring various elements of input together made it an attractive option for this research. The desire of this research to

explore one single Team in depth led to a case study becoming the preferred approach from the outset because of being able to “penetrate situations in ways that are not always susceptible to numerical analysis” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2008:253). The drive was to develop a more comprehensive view of the Team than statistical analysis would provide; it relied heavily on the emotive and conceptual input of the participants. A case study is:

The study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances (Stake 1995:xi).

This definition aligns with the aim of this research to establish a picture of the Team. Stake (1995) goes further, to place the qualitative case study into a context where the researcher “emphasizes episodes of nuance, the sequentiality of happenings in context, the wholeness of the individual” (Stake 1995:xi). Bassey reinforces this view and emphasizes the subjective nature of qualitative case study as an empirical enquiry by conceding that case study entails “value judgements being made by the researcher” (Bassey 2009:58) where “significance rather than frequency” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2008:258) defines the input of the participants.

Case study is “bounded by time and activity” (Creswell 2003:15), as in this situation where the research took place within a defined three-month period and focussed on the activities of the single Team. The decision brought the advantage that data gathered would be of a consistent period in the life of the Team and the participants; however, it potentially limited the longevity of the conclusions, as they would be derived from the one period. The decision of a single three-month data collection period eliminated action research as an approach, which calls for problems or situations to be identified, for solutions to be tried and the consequences analysed ‘in action’, involved with “questions about influencing processes of change” (McNiff & Whitehead 2006:10). Action research is a longer-term research process to do well; it takes time to implement an action

plan, evaluate results, devise revisions and then implement the next iteration:

Answers are held as provisional because any answer already has new questions within itself (McNiff & Whitehead 2006:30).

Case study describes a situation (Kyburz-Graber 2004), it answers 'why' or 'how', as here: how this Adventure Team is performing in the present. Case study is a depth study "in its natural context" (Hancock & Algozzine 2006:15), as in this study, which explores the Team in its operational setting. Unlike phenomenology (*Lebenswelt* (Denzin & Lincoln 2003:197), which concerns itself with personal narratives, this study took the collective voices of participants and compiled a depiction of the Team. Case study does not look to manipulate data, but to examine data in its own right in the first instance. Phenomenology is the "study of direct experience taken at face value" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007:22) and requires the researcher to explore the world through the eyes of others, assuming a reflective capability that relates far more specifically to the individual than it would to developing a portrayal of the Team. The case study researcher actively seeks to acquire multiple perspectives and a range of data in order to build a multi-faceted analysis process. Case study permits definitions and conclusions to be less than clinically clear, rather a degree of ambiguity and multiple or contingent truths are acceptable, which could be preferable when researching the professional context. Case study explores themes and subjects in a targeted manner and is applicable to people, organisations or issues (Gray 2004:123), making it ideal for this study, which strived for vicarious knowledge, free from possible personal objectives of the research participants. Their voices were brought together to compile the vision of the Team, which entailed the capacity to achieve depth of interrogation. Survey would have been an inappropriate approach here because it is "cross-sectional and longitudinal" (Creswell 2003:14), an approach that aims to



capture breadth rather than depth of data, “an insight into the real dynamics of situations and people” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2008:258). The standardised nature of the questions and the restrictive nature of the responses from a survey would have limited the ability to explore responses more deeply. Further, surveys tend to be in a written format, which would lose valuable meaning and supporting data in this instance; a case study is interactive, delving more deeply into responses and takes account of physical reactions (body language) as well as the spoken words. The sample group was relatively small and the intention was to delve into emotional and psychological development, which was not to be gained from an enclosed capacity of response. The research is neatly summarised thus:

Case studies strive to portray ‘what it is like’ to be in a particular situation, to catch the close up reality and ‘thick description’ of participants’ lived experiences of, thoughts about and feelings for a situation (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007:254).

Gillham’s (2000) assertion that in conducting a case study the researcher “develops *grounded theory*” (Gillham 2000) is contested; case study and grounded theory are separately identifiable strategies, although one must concede that the data collection methods employed within the strategy may involve the same processes. Woodside and Wilson (2003) emphasise that:

Case study is inquiry focussing on describing, understanding, predicting and/or controlling the individual (2003:493).

Stecher and Borko (2002) go further:

The distinguishing characteristic of the case study is that it attempts to examine a contemporary phenomenon in its real life context (2002:549).

Where grounded theory is a complex iterative process of using questions based around a starting concept to generate a successively refined perception, case study is time-bound; it develops a view at a single point or over a specified period to elicit results. Grounded

theory is an extension of case study, taking a repetitive approach and, as the name implies, “does not force the data to fit theory” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2008:492) but generates theory through (that is, grounded in) the data. Whilst case study may be an appropriate means to achieve grounded theory, if that is the goal of the research, this research had another objective: a picture. Grounded theory implies an absolute generalisation of findings, not sought through this research. The analysis of case study is derived from the deductions of the researcher, and where there is a single case with a single researcher, this has an obvious limitation of perspective, despite measures to avoid bias. This can detract from the quality of the data if the researcher is not aware and works to ensure avoidance of the issue. This research study took a single three-month period in which to gather data and establish a picture of the Team. However, it is intended that in the future this case study will form the basis of further iterative designs and become thereby a grounded theory study.

Yin (2009) emphasizes case study as an empirical inquiry located around a particular phenomenon (the Team). A case may be described as being typical of a number of others or as an extreme instance. For example, climbing may be an activity outside of one’s habitual environment and therefore considered adventure; a climb on a particular rock face or route would still be adventure, but would be relatively unique in a subset of defining characteristics. Being a study of singularity conducted in depth in natural settings (Bassey 1999), this research was *intrinsic* (Stake 1995) because, “in all its particularity *and* ordinariness, this case itself is of interest” (Stake 2005:437). As it was not seeking to demonstrate typicality of a more general vision, the study of the Team could not be identified as “instrumental” (Stake 1995), “explanatory” (Yin 1993) or “theory seeking” (Bassey 1998). The case study consisted of one case, the single local authority Youth Service Team, with subsections divined

from different categories of participant. Rather than using large samples and following a rigid protocol to examine a limited number of variables, this study facilitated an in-depth examination of the singular, allowing issues and events to be studied “as they *naturally* occur without introducing artificial changes or controls” (Denscombe 1998:32) and “drawing together the results of the exploration and analysis” (Bassey 1998:62). The research did not seek to define the interrelation between variables of the study, to justify a “potential causal path” (Yin 2003:69) of how and why participants learn through adventure. The focus is the case rather than the issue (Bassey 1998:62); developing a portrayal of the Team and the activities it delivers. Gerring (2007) defines the purpose as being to “shed light on a larger class of cases” (2007:20), which does not apply to this research as there is no drive for absolute universality; that is, there is no aim to depict all local authority adventure teams, simply to define this singular one. Stake (1995) defines this as *instrumental* case study and highlights that there is value in studying a singular case because of its singular (intrinsic) importance: the singular Adventure Team. The case study is simply the examination of an instance within enclosed limits, the study of the Team over a fixed period to establish a vision. The conclusions drawn are thus definable as *a truth* and not claimed to be *the truth*, as the case study accepts the evolution of the phenomena under study with time. The study may be comprised of a multitude of parts (defined as subsections by Stake 2005:449) or a number of instances may be examined to comprise research (defined as cross-case by Gerring 2007:20); in this research study, those subsections or instances can be defined as the different categories of participants (young people, managers, adventure workers, group leaders) and the different user groups of the adventure provision or the different sessions observed.

This research was “not a case history without purpose” (Easton 1992:1) but a professional doctorate, the essence of which is aiming

to move practice forward, fostering reflexion and understanding of the dynamics of a single setting at a specific point in time (Huberman & Miles 2002). The researcher wanted to “contribute to theoretical boundaries” (Gray 2004:126) by defining the interrelationship between forms of learning, with adventure as the founding basis of the work of this Team. The outcome of the study of the Team is “the creation of new knowledge and understanding” (Lee 2009:12) with the intention being to bring about professional change. By analysing the Team, the research aimed to establish both its location within the Youth Service and the Authority, and the place where the Team could be. In building an understanding of the Team and the way it operates and comparing this to the theoretical framework of how a Team could work, practice can be moved forward. By whatever professional/vocational definition that may be applied to the roles of the adventure workers, by themselves or by others, the outcome of the research is to move the Team and the individuals within and around it forward, progress them on to more effective outcomes, to a more sustainable and clearly evidenced future. This study was never envisaged as being in isolation, but as the first stage of a process of discovery and change. A single case study by a single researcher provides only one perception of reality, which may or may not be supported by another researcher. The intrinsic case study enables “understandings of what is important about the case within its own world” (Stake 2005:250): in this case, the representation of this Team within its existence inside a local authority structure. This provides an ideal basis for this study being an initial investigation, and has echoes of Johanna Haskell (Haskell, Linds & Ippolito 2002) who advocates the interpretation of encounters as shared and mutually meaningful lived experiences, namely, the researcher as an experienced adventure instructor who empathised with the participants whilst exploring their contribution to the research. The “enactive enquiry” (Haskell, Linds & Ippolito 2002) approach aligns

with case study in its focus on relationships and interactions, promoting a position of “embodied cognition” (Haskell, Linds, Ippolito 2002), where the researcher’s own ‘life space’ (narrative) affects and strengthens the collection and interpretation of data, bringing it to life through the empathic understanding the researcher has with and of the research and its participants:

The enactive approach to researching or studying experience does not separate our experience and ongoing actions ... As such, experiencing cannot be represented as a fixed event but as evolving through a continual interplay of perception and action ... This enactive inquiry probes into the flesh or experiencing where perception is intertwined with worldviews and theories that come into being through shared dialogue and living interaction (Haskell, Linds, Ippolito 2002:10)

There is a heavy reliance within case study on participants, who are people and thus variable, fickle and changeable: “one is like all other people, like some other people and not like any other person” (Young 2006:35). Without careful management, the researcher risks ulterior motives from participants distorting their input and the collusion of participants in responses, especially if the participants see a particular gain or loss to themselves (as individuals or collectively) from the research outcomes. In this research, that was not a risk, as the research was technically external to the Team as it was not organisationally mandated and therefore not envisaged by the Team as necessarily meaningful. Grünbaum’s assertion that case study equates to “an ‘anything goes’ approach” (Grünbaum 2007:79) is disputed: it is as rigorously constructed and subjected to the same degree of scrutiny as any other form. The data collection methods of this case study had to demonstrate the same standards as any other method that may have been used.

### 3.6 Data Collection

In planning the case study, the researcher was anxious to ensure that as valid a picture of the Team as possible was built and so it was

apparent that as much data from as many sources as possible was required. This was supported by Stake's (1995) assertion that in a qualitative case study of this nature:

The richness means that the study cannot rely on a single data collection method (Stake 1995:4).

The data collection methods of this case study were engineered to ensure that as wide a variety of data as possible could be accessed. Interviews with representatives of the different user groups, their group leaders, the adventure workers and the Authority managers were considered essential. To substantiate these and to add greater context and legitimacy to these, the researcher determined to observe adventure sessions 'in action', which would provide an insight to the processes and interactions being presented in the interviews. To add further credence to the themes and findings emerging, the researcher sought secondary (documentary) data sources that would further add context or explain circumstances. These three forms of data were then brought together to develop the ultimate findings and outcomes (see Figure 13):

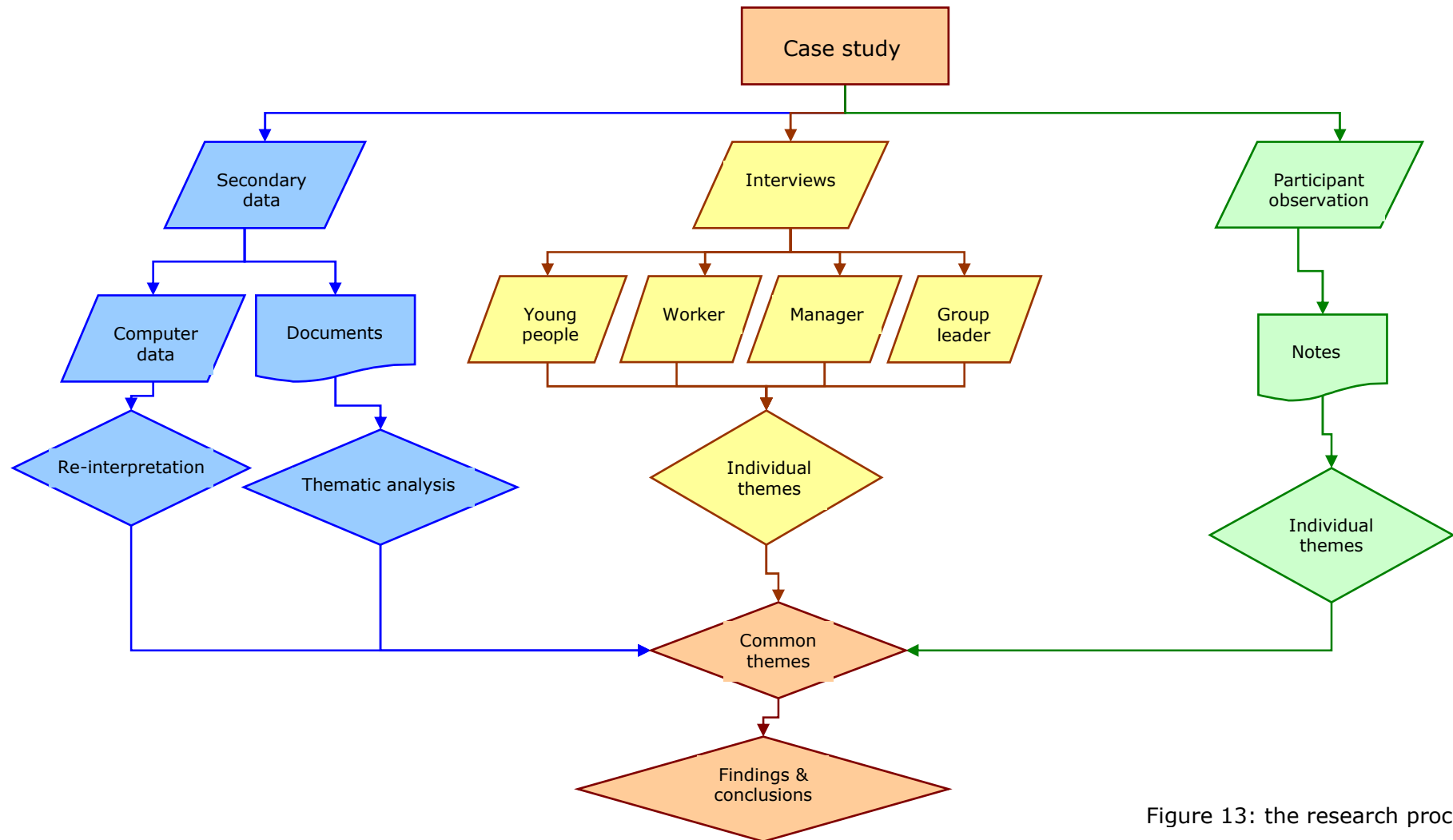


Figure 13: the research process

It has always been considered fundamental to the research to allow the participants to form the vision through their own words. Thus, the straightforward approach of enabling the participants to speak directly appeared as an obvious route of achieving this, making interviews a clear form of data collection: a “means of contemporary storytelling in which persons divulge life accounts” (Fontana & Frey 2005:499). The issue with interviews as a data collection method is that there can be misunderstandings between what an interviewee says or means and the way that the interviewer interprets their words (Silverman 2004:123). Actually watching adventure engagements taking place was determined as a suitable means of supporting the interviews. However, a researcher standing external to the adventure process may be intrusive, disrupting the session and skewing the data. The researcher therefore determined participant observation to be a much more appropriate method of data collection, enabling interaction with the participants and being a part of their engagement “in a context of collaborative research” (Angrosino 2005:732). Over the long existence of the Authority, a multitude of documents has been written for other purposes. These may have relevance to the research or may support or question data from the other two sources. Hence, secondary data (also known as desktop research or documentary research) became the third method of data collection elected by the researcher.

As a researcher, it was essential to ensure the collection of as much informative and comprehensive data as possible, but it was equally as important to set a defined boundary to the collection period. The data was collected during the three-month period of December 2009 to February 2010. Traditionally this is a quieter period within the schedule of the Team and was not intrusive to the programme or to the adventure workers. The pilot study was conducted over the two-month period of September to October 2009, when the hectic summer schedule of the pilot study Team was winding down. This



allowed then two months of reflection to review the research process and assess amendments prior to commencing the mainstream study. Although bounded by time, the study involved only one period of data collection and cannot therefore be considered longitudinal, which involves the analysis of data collected at different points "to study change and development over time" (Gray 2009:34). A longitudinal study was not achievable because the short-term nature of the engagement of some participants with the Team would not have facilitated repeated access. Using multiple methods of data collection supports research validity by helping to balance out any potential weaknesses of one method (Gray 2004:33, Creswell 2003:196). The use of multiple methods of data collection contributes to the reliability and validity of qualitative research by providing "multiple measures of the same construct" (Gray 2009:252). The perennial drive of a researcher is that "there is always more to know" (Richardson 2005:963) but there is also a need to be realistic and accept that at some point the data gathering must stop and the analysis begin.

Such focussed attention as participating in research was a very new situation for many young people and as a researcher one had to be mindful of the fact that young people are "still learning how to decide what can be said" (Kay, Cree, Tisdall & Wallace 2003). Involving young people in research entailed the researcher ensuring that they understood the process and the use to which their input would be put (Kay, Cree, Tisdall & Wallace 2003). The "specific combination of social relations" (Bennett, Cieslik & Miles 2003:162) that is the dynamic of interaction of this sort differed between the adult-to-adult engagement of the researcher with adventure workers, managers and group leaders in that adults generally have more confidence to challenge the encounter or assert their right to end it. Establishing a positive relationship with young people was fundamental to the success of the data gathering and included such aspects as making sure that the participant was happy with the venue, being welcoming

and friendly in manner, offering young people the option of non-participatory moral support and ensuring that young people understood the extent of their voluntary involvement.

### *3.6.1 Data collection and interviews*

Semi-structured interviews, are “guided conversations rather than structured queries” (Yin 2009:106), providing direction but enabling freedom of elucidation. The researcher has always advocated polyvocality (Denzin & Lincoln 2003), allowing “participatory democracy” (Denzin & Lincoln 2005:152) to open the way for the enactive freefall pedagogy espoused by Haskell (2004). It was always considered essential not to remove the emotive engagement of participants; the voices of each individual were heard in their own right before being combined to establish a complete picture. This research entailed an interviewer known to the participants, which resolved the issue of the ‘interviewer effect’ where the interviewee becomes shy or responds in a way that they imagine the interviewer would wish. The interview is an important data collection tool, “the main road to multiple realities” (Stake 1995:64). A schedule of the interview questions deployed may be seen in Appendix 1 and an indication of the interview participants is available in Appendix 2. Notes were handwritten on the interview question proforma during each interview as to manner, focus and atmosphere; these were later typed into a proforma (see Appendix 3).

### *3.6.2 Data collection and participant observation*

The observation process took place ‘in the field’, observing adventure sessions as they occurred, recording what people did and how they interrelated. The process utilises a short time scale and is easy to set up, as it needs only a pen and paper. It is an important method of data collection (Somekh & Lewin 2005:158) but raises debate as to whether the adventure participants behave naturally if they know they are being watched. Observation is direct, drawing upon what is

seen at first hand, rather than how people say they behave, react or interact. It differed from the other two methods in that it required the researcher to be more aware on how and what to observe, how to record data, and how to remain detached and involved at the same time. The fact that the researcher assumes multiple roles is also unique to observational study (Silverman 2006:11). Observation allows the researcher to use visual and (in the case of this research) physical senses, rather than relying on interviewing techniques, thus enabling them to capture greater depth than some other methods (such as interviews, which rely on listening more than any other sense) and allows the researcher to understand participants from their own perspective.

There are two types of observation: systematic (direct) observation and participant observation. The systematic observer remains outside the situation being observed, perhaps covertly watching and recording events and behaviour. The researcher became a participant observer. As the name suggests, the observer “participates in the daily life of the people under study” (Denscombe, 1998:148), joining in with events and behaviour then subsequently recording what has happened. The observations of this study were made whilst conducting sessions within the role of being an adventure instructor. The strength of this was that it allowed the observer as a researcher to observe behaviour in the setting in which it normally occurred, namely to observe adventure sessions taking place. The researcher adopted their professional role of adventure worker, supporting rather than leading session delivery, whilst simultaneously studying the session participants. There was an observation proforma drafted (see Appendix 4) against which the researcher recorded notes. The observer could witness the interactions of group members and their engagement with activities, assessing independently the informal learning processes, the structure of the sessions and the development of the young people involved. The limitation to observation as a

method in this situation is that it is descriptive, not explanatory. Data is analysed to study the “meaning of the behaviour, the language and the interaction” (Creswell 2007:69). Because the observer was engaged in the session in a known and expected role of instructor, there was no intrusion and the participants all accepted the observer. An indication of the sessions observed may be seen in Appendix 5.

### *3.6.3 Data collection and secondary data*

Secondary data (also called documentary research) is a means to explore existing work, either internal or external, which may answer current questions, identify new ones or signpost new issues. It can rarely be considered a data collection method in isolation, particularly in qualitative research, but is useful to support data gleaned through interviews and observation (primary data) or to help provide a context (Silverman 2006:19). Secondary data research is a broad term that is used here to include computer databases and archives. A proforma was drafted against which the documents could be analysed (Appendix 6). Much of the financial and user data collected was quantitative in nature:

Abstracting data from statistical records over time is a particularly useful way of making sense of and evaluating what you’ve been told, and what documents and other records show (Gillham 2000:81).

In addition, secondary data may indicate avenues of investigation and people to contact. The researcher needs “to have one’s mind organised but be open for unexpected clues” (Stake 1995:68). Documents can be an unobtrusive form of research when easily accessible to the researcher (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight 2001:168). Secondary data may be used in its original format or it may provide the basis of (re)interpretation of data for the purposes of the specific research in question:

Refusing to question or wonder, uncritically or sheepishly following the party line, suppressing

curiosity and so on destroy authenticity (Coghlan 2007:338)

Organisational documents are a permanent, existing record, which can make them relatively easy to access and a cost-effective form of exploration (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007:182). However, even as an existing employee, one cannot assume that “just because documents exist, they will be available for research” (Bell 2005:124). One has to be circumspect in the interrogation of existing data, so as not to cause offence or harm to current staff or users. The Team database, operational plans, booking system and financial records were explored, as were organisational monitoring and evaluation records, policies, procedures and user evaluations. The computer database was interrogated to identify user groups, explore income and expenditure and examine internal and external policy and procedure documents. As a public sector organisation, much of the data is not considered confidential if no personal data is revealed. Ethical practice dictated that permission be sought from the author and the senior management team prior to usage of any data. Existing documents are always written from the perspective of the author though and thus are subject to their bias and analysis. One has to “interpret past events by the traces which have been left” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007:193). The list of analysed documents may be observed in Appendix 7.

### 3.7 Research Piloting

In order to ensure consistency throughout the study of the Team, the planned system and processes were engineered towards accessing equivalent data from all participants. Having defined the research process, it was essential to “test it out” (Dawson 2002:95) by “following (and pilot testing) ... formal field procedures” (Yin 2009:93). It was fundamental that the entire process be robust and able to answer the research questions (Creswell 2003):

The extent to which particular constructs or concepts can give an account for performance on the test (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007:163).

Once the data collection starts, it is difficult and time-consuming to start again with another process. The data could be skewed the second time around as participants are already aware of the focus of the research and would have had time to reflect on their previous contribution. That would be assuming, of course, that they were willing to participate a second time, as the regression back to the start would have lost their confidence in the researcher:

It is only having gone through a process of analysing and evaluating the limited data generated by a pilot test that the kind of distance often required to focus on the wider issues of research importance is generally acquired (Sampson 2004:399).

There is very little literature regarding piloting, with vague indications of a pilot being “to get familiar with the field” (Boeije 2010:22) and a pilot being useful to “help you to refine your data collection plans” (Yin 2009:92). Yet conducting a pilot study in advance of the mainstream study is mandated by those who do mention it as being “routine” (Stake 1995:65). By applying common sense, it seems logical that participants have to be similar to those in the live phase, yet preferably not able to discuss their contribution with mainstream participants. If possible, the researcher wants participants entering the interview or observation untainted by knowledge of the contribution of anyone else. In this Team, piloting posed an interesting challenge. A singular intrinsic case study of a Team comprised of a relatively small population created difficulty in segregating a pilot group and not tainting the core sample. However, from the perspective of ensuring research validity (trustworthiness) in the process and outcomes of the research, it was essential to test and refine the proposed data collection methods. A useful and supportive comment made by Gray is that “the first case study could constitute a pilot case” (2009:250). Although intended to relate to a multiple

case study, the comment gave this research some positive guidance in that the participants of another Authority were approached for the pilot study. This removed the practical population concerns and gave rise to an important consideration for the mainstream study, that of moving the research forward in the future. The research of this thesis study may form the basis of future wider studies into the legacy of "Every Child Matters" (ECM) (DfES 2003), "Learning Outside the Classroom" (LOtC) (DfES 2006) and into the application of adventure as a learning tool.

In 1998, the Authority of the mainstream research established unitary status. This created a County and a City Authority, with two Adventure Teams. The Adventure Team of the City and the Adventure Team of the research had the same origins and still had similarities. Engaging a 'sister' Adventure Team allowed the process to be tested without risk of contamination of mainstream participants. The opportunity to undertake the pilot was personally refreshing and enabled the proving of the proposed methodology. Unwittingly the pilot study also provided an opportunity to overcome a potential weakness of qualitative research, that of researcher subjectivity. The pilot study was the execution of the research in miniature, and therefore enabled the undertaking of the entire process of the planned research unhindered by concerns of distorting or tainting the principal study group. In doing so, the researcher could self-reflect, enabling realisation of the way of others, broadening the base of comparative interpretation, which only strengthened the final analysis.

### *3.7.1 Piloting and interviews*

"Trying out the questions" (Stake 1995:65) during the pilot study interviews involved eight people: two managers, two adventure workers, two young people and two group leaders. The interviews were conducted in the intended manner of the core study and the proposed mainstream questions deployed. This "dress rehearsal" (Yin

2009:92) enabled an assessment of whether the questions would be adequate to gain desired data from participants, as well as to remove any ambiguity and test the language and the presentation of the questions. After asking the intended questions, unrecorded supplementary questions were posed around the participants' thoughts as to whether the right tone was pitched, whether they felt the environment was suitable, whether the questions were intrusive; it is a valuable benefit of pilot cases to be able to consider additional issues to the core study (Yin 2009:93). Also unrecorded and outside of the test interview itself, the participants were asked to comment upon such issues as attire and whether there were any omissions from the questions. It was considered essential to engage two participants of each category in order that the pilot process did not rely on a sole perspective.

Overall, the interview process went well and, other than amending the wording to a few questions, there were no changes to the structure or questions after the pilot phase was completed. Questions were added to the manager and adventure worker schedule to query their own experiences, feelings towards adventure generally, and feelings of adventure as a tool of engagement. A question was added also to the manager schedule to ascertain their perception of key drivers, as it was determined this influenced how they perceived performance. The conversations with participants as to environment, dress, tone of voice and demeanour proved positive and no amendments were made in this respect. The one big change to the interview process was in respect of the young people. Although it had been known that many of the young people would not be accessible beyond the period of their engagement with the Team, it was not foreseen that there would be an issue of verification as one anticipated being able to rely on email and telephone communication. However, young people voiced a preference to have their answers recorded in written form and then sign the document immediately.



### *3.7.2 Piloting and participant observation*

There were two sessions piloted where the researcher became a participant observer, using the proposed observation exemplar. The sessions piloted were selected by the researcher from a range indicated by the adventure workers. The observer was permitted to work as a support member of staff on both sessions, despite not being employed by the pilot organisation. This provided for a full trial of the intended participant observation protocol to avoid “loosely determined assertions” (Stake 1995:12). As with the interviews, at the end of each observation the participants were requested to comment as to how they felt regarding the observer presence and the difference that it made to their engagement. Two amendments were made to the participant observation schedule to include a section on the initial enthusiasm of the group members and one section on the location and engagement of the group leaders during the session. These were felt to be required because of wanting to ascertain the support young people received and the emotional impact of this by someone the participants see as a leader and a role model. The first additional section was to support subsequent analysis of the mood and attitude of the participants and how this affected their engagement and success. The second additional section was to lend greater context to the contribution to the study of group leaders.

Participant observation is a “special mode of observation” (Yin 2009:111) where it is important that the approach of the researcher remain unobtrusive to the activity. Piloting the intended process and subsequently discussing it with the pilot participants enabled the researcher to become aware of instances where the observation process may overtake what is, to the participants, the primary role of delivery; for example witnessing particular interactions and remove disturbance of the “ordinary activity of the case” (Stake 1995:12). The observation pilot process enabled a robust and comprehensive format to be drafted that would enable the researcher to maximise

the opportunity for observation in the mainstream study. Having the opportunity to discuss further the observation process with participants was valuable in developing the final proforma for observation recordings.

### *3.7.3 Piloting and secondary data*

Secondary data formed a minor but vital component of the data collection (Stake 1995:68) that could “corroborate and augment” (Yin 2009:103) other data. The research was developed principally on the primary data gathered in the interview and participant observation processes. The secondary data reviewed consisted of internal briefing sheets, surveys of young people, reports and sessional recordings by the adventure workers. The latter are designed to be reflective notes for staff. Two sections were added to the proforma following the pilot phase, one to note any known previous impact of the document and one to record particularly useful quotations. The former was desirable simply to denote the original value of the document and the latter saved time in extracting quotations later in the writing up of findings. Documents of a financial nature were not available for analysis during the pilot phase. However, this was not perceived as a hindrance to the core study; as a qualified accountant, the researcher felt confident in previously well-practiced analysis procedures to allow this element not to be rehearsed. Moreover, the intention of the pilot was not to explore the financial position of the pilot Adventure Team in the way of the mainstream Adventure Team.

### 3.8 Data sampling

Research entails the study of a population. A population may be defined as the entire collection of all the elements that possess the characteristic to be understood; here those elements are ‘adventure’ (young people, group leaders, adventure workers, managers, resources and activities). Within each category, a list was drawn up of the individual user groups, along with a rough analysis of the

number of times each user group had attended one of the adventure bases. The groups were approached for young people and group leaders as interview participants or participant observation in descending order of frequency of attendance. The sample also included the adventure workers and managers of the Team, the resources and the activities.

Researchers rarely survey the entire population (Adèr, Mellenbergh & Hand 2008), the cost is too high and the population can be dynamic (individual elements change over time). Here, the participants and group leaders change regularly: a group may attend for an adventure session only once or for a series of sessions; there may be a number of sessions for the same group but the participants may be different each time; different group leaders from the same organisation may arrange sessions for their own groups. Consistency is not attainable and engaging the whole of each subset in the data collection is impractical. The goal hence became finding a representative subset of the population, known as a sample (see Figure 14).

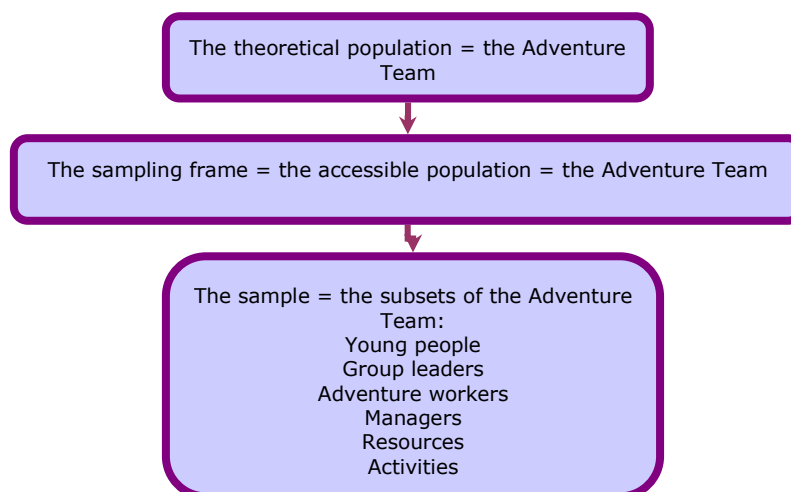


Figure 14: The data sampling framework

Figure 14 shows how the overarching population of the Team is broken down into components to establish the representative sample through which the data was gathered. The concept of 'representative' is in relation to the case under study, not whether the case is representative of the overall phenomena; hence,

'representative' in this situation is about finding participants representative of the subset of the user group, not representative of adventure overall. The main advantages of sampling are that the cost is lower, the data collection is faster and, since the quantity of data collected is smaller and more manageable, it is easier to ensure accuracy and quality of data. Sampling instances are picked "on the basis of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristics" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007:114). It starts with the drafting of the sampling frame, a definition of the accessible population (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007:108): the Adventure Team. The essential word here is 'accessible' because the theoretical population could be too broad and inaccessible to consider, for example, the study could have considered all adventure provisions within the country. However, this research entails the study of the one Team and thus, as the whole population is potentially accessible to the researcher, the theoretical population equates to the accessible population and the sampling frame is the Team. The sample was then drawn from the sampling frame. Sampling for this research entailed drawing a representation of each element (as identified above) that comprises the Adventure Team. For reporting and administrative purposes, the user groups of the Team are subdivided into five categories and these formed the framework of further subsets from which to draw the sample of young people and group leaders:

1. Own youth group – the Team operates its own 'drop in' sessions for young people aged 11 to 19 years
2. Statutory youth groups – brought to the bases by youth workers as part of their wider programme, but are part of the same Authority Youth Service.
3. County groups – as the statutory groups, the organisation is located within the Authority boundary but is not part of the Youth Service.

4. Out of County groups – as the name suggests, these groups are neither part of the Youth Service, nor are they located within the Authority conurbation.
5. Social Services groups – day centres bring groups on a regular basis to do activities. The members of these groups include all ages and all suffer a physical or mental difficulty. This research focussed on the Team as it delivers activities to the 13 to 19 Youth Service age range and thus, because of their age, this group was not included in the sampling frame of this research.

As an “embedded case study” (Yin 2009:50, Gray 2009:256), these are distinct “embedded units of analysis” (Yin 2009:50) (see Figure 15).

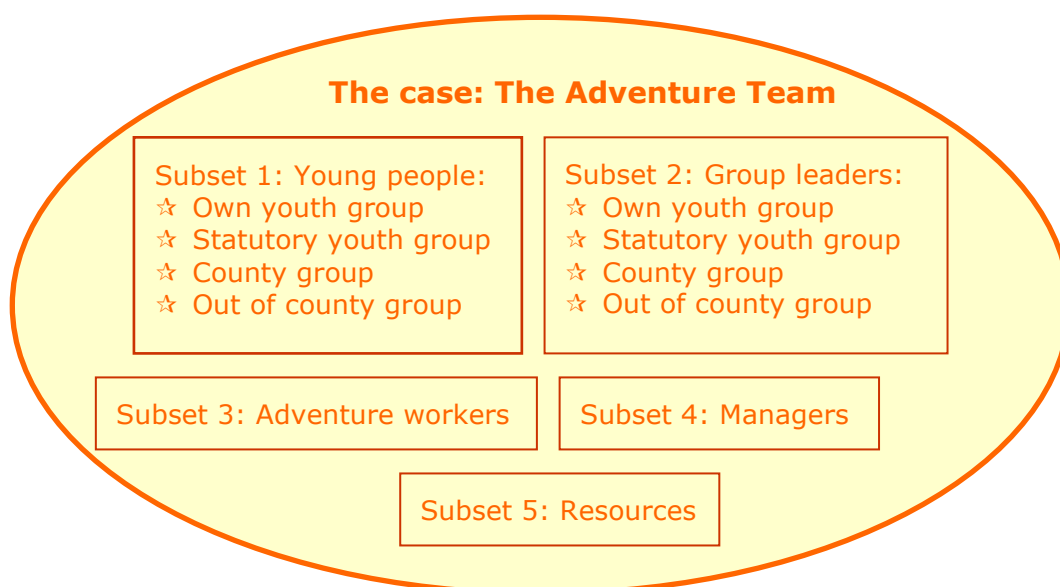


Figure 15: The embedded nature of the case

The number of participants aimed for depth rather than breadth of input (Ritchie & Lewis 2003). Gerring (2007:121) describes sampling as “whatever cases are subjected to formal analysis” and these in themselves are described as “a matter of discretionary, judgmental choice” by Yin (2009:58). However, the selection cannot be arbitrary and without pre-planning towards the ultimate objectives of the research, for the “opportunity to learn is of primary importance” (Stake (1995:6). All participants, sessions and documents were

"intentionally selected according to the needs of the study" (Boeije 2008:35). The young people were asked to volunteer to participate in the interviews, but the groups of young people asked were drawn from within the pre-analysed groups of attendees, as were the group leaders; the sessions observed were selected from within the categories of the subsets of user groups. Similarly, the documents selected were chosen for their relevance to the sample frame. The workers and hierarchical managers were all included because their number was small enough to enable that to be the case. The literature for qualitative research tends to avoid specific details concerning sample size, making vague indications of the need to "collect extensive detail" (Creswell 2007:126). Further, the literature relating to case studies predominantly covers multiple cases although, as Gerring points out: "a single case is not unusual" (2007:22):

The intent in qualitative research is not only to generalise the information ... but to elucidate the particular (Creswell 2007:126).

With regard to the group leaders and young people, the sampling strategy of voluntary participation was felt to contribute to full engagement, rather than participants feeling 'targeted'. Where the adventure workers and managers were concerned, it was determined that there would be a confidence emanating from being employed by the organisation under study, arising from familiarity with the topic and the researcher's pre-existing relationship that would support participation. In contrast, the group leaders and young people may not feel such certainty and self-assurance, thus volunteering to engage would indicate those participants feeling they had something valuable to contribute and confident enough to express it.

It was considered irrelevant whether the participants were male or female. The importance of gender depends generally on the nature of the research being undertaken. The Team participants were largely male overall purely by virtue of the fact that the management

hierarchy of the Authority is dominated by men. As an anonymity measure, ethnicity was not recorded or used as a part of the analysis of this study. Age and ethnicity, equally, were not considerations for the study. The participants were selected purely because of their position as young person, manager, adventure worker or group leader. This stance is supported in the literature by recommending appropriateness over social categorisation (Gray 2004) and the relativity of the sample chosen to the generalisability of the research (Guba & Lincoln 1981). The managers and adventure workers were approached directly to request their participation in the research. In requesting participation by young people and group leaders, the research was described and explained to the group within each category that had made most use of the adventure facilities in the past year and a request made for two young people and a group leader to participate in the research as interviewees. The parents or guardians of these two participants were then approached for consent to allow the participants to be involved, following provision of full details of the process. Requests were also made to the supporting pastoral staff for volunteers to be interviewed.

### *3.8.1 Data sampling and interviews*

In total there were 29 interviews conducted during the study: six managers (following up the hierarchy of the Team upwards), all four full-time adventure workers of the Team, two casual workers, four group leaders, twelve young people (three from County youth groups, three from statutory groups, three from out of County groups and three from the Team's own youth groups); there was also one additional interview with a technical adviser to the Team, employed by the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority. Three interviews were conducted with young people rather than the original plan of two purely because of there being three very eager people coming forward from two user groups and allowing three from each user group retained equity of numbers. It was also perceived that the

additional input could only add to the integrity of the study at relatively little additional effort. The interviews were designed to contain between 20 and 30 questions, depending upon the participant, and each interview lasted between one and two and a half hours. The questions were all drawn principally from the underlying principles of the Youth Service, as this was the overarching division to which the Team belonged. These principles themselves were based upon the "Every Child Matters: Change for Children" (ECM) (DfES 2003) initiative and therefore almost all questions were derived from this. For the young people, the questions were built around the five outcomes and were designed to explore how the experiences of the young people had met these expectations. There were two further questions to assess the 'distance travelled' of the young person throughout their adventure engagement. For the adventure workers and the managers, the questions were framed in the context of adventure as a tool of learning but operating within the structure of a larger organisation and with a requirement to meet monitoring and performance measures and targets. The questions of the group leaders were engineered to assess their understanding of what their group would have or had achieved and how much prior preparation had been undertaken with either the Team or the young people. This research involved one-to-one interviews, the commonest form, which was felt to promote an openness that would not exist during group conversations. The interviews were in a semi-structured style, which is less formal, more open and less artificial than a formal interview (Hammersley 1992:163) but gave one more control than in an unstructured interview. The semi-structured format offered flexibility for the interviewee to speak more widely and determine their own points of emphasis and interest (Bell 2003, Hancock & Algozzine 2006). A deliberately unstructured interview can feel too open and the interviewee can be unsure as to the extent of their help. The



intimacy of the one-to-one setting provided the chance to access specific information and to explore issues that arose. To do this, the same questions needed to be asked in each interview but the interview had to remain flexible (Dawson, 2002:28), thus probes were required to enhance the richness of the data. Probes are:

An interview tool used to go deeper into the interview responses (Patton 1990:238).

The purpose of these interviews was to achieve a deeper understanding of the experiences and perspectives of the adventure participants; it was therefore important that the interview questions and the probes should be:

General in nature and should not try to lead the respondent (Gray 2009:348).

A semi-structured interview is a tool of discovery, enabling depth and revelation to support subjectivist, constructive interpretation, whereas a structured interview is restrictive in nature and prevents full participative input. The adventure workers appreciated being sought out and were keen to participate as they felt they provided useful knowledge. A strength of any organisation can be its workforce (Senge 1990), as there is often a wealth of unexploited expertise and practical knowledge, lying dormant as untapped potential. By appearing "genuinely naive" (Yin 2009:107) the interviewer was able to draw out detailed information; interviews are "more than just a conversation" (Denscombe 1998:109). The individual conversation of the interview was an opportunity to express views honestly and in a safe environment. The interviewees empathised with the aim of the interview so there was a catharsis, fed by feeling appreciated and having knowledge and experience acknowledged. The interviewer has skills "akin to the listening skills involved in counselling" (Dunne 1995:65) as interviewees were free to relay knowledge, experiences, feelings, thoughts and insights, giving participants an opportunity to 'offload' but also allowing them to think through issues aloud. The adults participating preferred the

one-to-one format for its confidential nature, which fostered openness within a 'secure' environment. Young people have less maturity and life experience to bring to an interview, which brought them to prefer the semi-structured style, as it offered the freedom to speak and elucidate but within the guidance of particular topics: "an atmosphere conducive to open and undistorted communication" (Silverman 2004:144). The venue set the scene for the empathy and openness of the encounter. It was essential to create a sense of ownership for young people and therefore the interview had to take place within familiar surroundings, but it was not considered appropriate to travel to their home. This was not seen as being conducive to open conversation and confidentiality.

Although informed consent was accessed prior to involvement, the start of the face-to-face interview set the scene and it was important to revisit the aims of the research, the voluntary nature of participation and issues of confidentiality and anonymity, including limitations under safeguarding legislation. This was time-consuming but developed focus and understanding (Kay, Cree, Tisdall & Wallace 2003). It was felt important at the start to emphasize the control that the participant had in the research, especially for young people, who may not have the confidence to adhere to their rights, should they so wish. Their involvement was voluntary and they had to feel comfortable with the whole process (Gray 2009:379). To this end, all participants needed to be clear that they could decline to respond or end the interview if they no longer wished to participate. If anyone had withdrawn, this would not have affected the data collection unduly, as alternative participants would have been sought. In order to concentrate fully and have accurate access to data subsequently, the interviews were digitally recorded: "a necessity, I believe, in accurately recording information" (Creswell 2007:134). This enabled the material to be revisited later and the same inflections and emphases of the initial conversation to be accessible, avoiding

potential reinterpretation or misinterpretation. Throughout the interview, personal field notes were made that supported the recordings. These concerned body language, mannerisms and the interviewer instincts, feelings and reactions. One could have used video but this was felt to be too intrusive as interviewees become unnecessarily self-conscious. These notes were handwritten, jotted onto the question proforma during the interview and later typed up. This was felt to be less daunting for the interviewee, rather than having the interviewer scribbling onto a pre-drafted proforma during the interview, as if in a job interview.

A drawback to one-to-one face-to-face interviews is the resource implication in terms of time and expense. Courtesy dictated that the interviewer travel to the interviewee, involving cost to the research. It was believed however that it was essential to the integrity of the research to obtain the optimum involvement of the interviewee (Guba & Lincoln 1981:174). This required the interview taking place at a time and venue convenient to the interviewee, almost irrespective of the demand upon the interviewer. It was also essential to allow plenty of time for the interview, so that both parties could relax and achieve the maximum level of data gathering from the process. For each 'type' of interviewee, one tried to structure the questions appropriately, without putting words into the participant's mouth; similarly, the researcher and the environment endeavoured to be presented according to the nature of the interviewee (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2008). For example where the Senior Management Team was concerned, it was felt a more formal wording and style were required. Thus, dress was far more formal, the interviews were conducted in more formal meeting rooms and a professionally stiff and reserved demeanour was maintained. In contrast, the interviews with the young people were much more informal. Dress was more casual, the meeting took place in a quiet room at an adventure base and a more relaxed and untailored manner was adopted. This does

not mean in any way that the young people were afforded less respect or less attention, merely that one strived to afford them a more comfortable and inviting atmosphere.

### *3.8.2 Data sampling and participant observation*

For the participant observation data collection, two sessions within each user category were selected and the group leaders and the young people were notified that the researcher wished to observe that session, giving them the opportunity to decline if they wished. In eight sessions, data was gathered through participant observation (two of County youth groups, two of statutory groups, two of out of County groups and two of the Team's own youth groups). The recording exemplar itself was devised to record both the facts of the session and the immediate perceptions and emotional impact on the researcher. This process engaged those not willing or not selected for the interviews. The observer was an adventure activity instructor working as a 'second' to the lead member of staff whilst the activity took place. This allowed the observer to fully engage with the group but be able to absorb the witnessing of the session rather than being the lead instructor and continually at the forefront of the activity (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2008:260). It was considered a positive aspect to have a less participative role, as one was able to focus on the recording process and endeavouring to ensure that one engaged in the observation process, rather than be distracted by leading or participating (Yin 2009:113). At the start of the session, the researcher took the lead in introducing the session, setting the scene for the activity and building anticipation for what was to come; at the same time, the researcher reminded the participants of the impending participant observation and the purpose and intended use of the data collected. At the end of the session, the researcher again took the lead and provided a review of the session, supporting and guiding the group members in realising their learning and its relationship to other aspects of their lives; simultaneously the

researcher presented a 'raw' version of the participant observation that entailed observations of group roles, processes and outcomes.

Kawulich (2005) outlines the stages of participant observation:

Initial contact; shock; discovering the obvious; the break; focusing; exhaustion; the second break; frantic activity and leaving.

Her point is that the researcher needs time to absorb what they have seen and reflect upon it. Therefore, it was essential the observer be able to step back at intervals for some 'quiet time' to think and absorb what was happening, without "being bombarded by new stimuli" (Kawulich 2005) from the session (Stake 1995:62). Without conscious focus and measures in place to support the prevention of bias, the researcher's personal narrative would potentially skew recall and interpretation. Even as an experienced activity instructor, one sees what one is used to seeing and any ambiguity will become shaped by that which is known and comfortable, by one's own memories of past sessions delivered or activities in which one has engaged (Bassey 1998). That which has shaped life in the past can filter out negatives and exaggerate positives; the present state (physical, emotional and psychological factors) has an impact on what is recorded, how it is recorded and how it is interpreted. It was considered essential to remind the participants at the start of the session that they were to be under observation and that this was not a 'personal' observation of any individual (Gray 2009). It was felt to be ethically correct that the participants should be informed of the observations and thus be given an option to decline participation, perhaps moving to another group within the session. It was emphasised to groups that observation was focussed on the session, rather than individuals because it was considered that the participants may otherwise become self-conscious and perhaps intimidated, hence the more natural method of observing whilst being engaged in the usual and accepted function of being an activity leader was acceptable and less intrusive (Gillham 2000). The issue of

access to the groups for data collection was straightforward as the observer was a legitimate member of the organisation with a professional function. This resolved what could have been a difficulty in the data collection process (Stake 1995:52).

As a participant observer, the activity instructor naturally developed a relationship with the subjects under study (Yin 2009). The participants were being challenged and encouraged to think and behave 'outside the box', divorced from their environmental and social norms. It was also a potential issue when working with younger or vulnerable young people, who seek a positive role model in their lives. The instructor naturally becomes an empathic mentor, which could have endangered the research, had the instructor not been aware of the fact (Priest & Gass 2005); despite the level of involvement with the study group(s), it was essential that one always remembered their researcher role and remained detached. Empathy with fellow participants, the subjects of the observation, can lead to skewed or incomplete recording and interpretation. As the researcher, one had to remain detached and focussed, objective in the absorption of the observation.

Due to the different life experiences and thought processes of individuals, it can be anticipated that no two observers will produce the same field notes or draw the same conclusions, unless they have undergone extensive and intensive joint planning of the observation process for a particular research. Thus, observation can be labelled as potentially highly subjective and biased towards the viewpoint of the observer (Guba & Lincoln 1981). Equally, the powers of observation and recall of individuals will vary, which will influence the depth and accuracy of the field notes taken. As a participant observer, it was essential for the instructor to write up the notes as soon as possible after the observation event. Observation is a complex method because it requires engaging the five senses to collect data, and retain it in memory to write up later (Stake

1995:62). It is impossible to remember every detail, every nuance, every subtle gesture, due to human frailty and the natural biological filters of the mind. One is imperfect as a human being and mentally one processes that which one perceives to make it align with their own psychological preferences and what one already knows and understands (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2008:469). By immersing oneself in the culture of the group or activity under observation, the research accessed the intentional and emotional drive that lay behind the observed behaviour of groups by engaging youth work practices of generating conversations and discussions (Silverman 2006:68). This engagement offered a greater depth of qualitative, emotional, contextual and holistic interpretations of observed data than were one a systematic observer.

### *3.8.3 Data sampling and secondary data*

Secondary data is pre-existing in an organisation and relatively cheap and easy to access. Documents "record current and past practices" (McNiff & Whitehead 2006:143) and can be valuable sources of validation for propositions derived from other data sources. Payne and Payne (2004) describe the documentary method as the technique used to categorise, investigate, interpret and identify the limitations of physical sources. Forty-one documents were analysed and five years' of data analysed from the Team's databases (the duration of existence of the current database). The analysis of secondary data provided information to establish the history of the Team and provide an insight into its present-day operations. The analysis enabled a profile to be determined of the Team: creating a foundation for understanding its background, how it came to exist as it does in the present, identifying the young people with whom it works, establishing its financial circumstances and building a concept of how it is viewed by the people with whom it is engaged. The secondary data was analysed through a drafted proforma, which was engineered to extract key themes and highlight major points from each

document studied. Using secondary (documentary) research as a means of data collection was not considered a major source of data gathering (Yin 2009:103); it was only to supplement information collected through the in-depth interviews and participant observation and to achieve background detail not readily within the knowledge of the primary participants, for example financial details.

An initial scan of all the potential documents and information sources available within the Authority was made relative to the Team under study and a list drafted of those considered most appropriate and relevant to the study. Having the support of the organisation meant that senior figures within the Authority also proposed documentation that may be appropriate to consider for analysis. The selected documents were chosen because of their relevance to the Team, thus operational plans and direct proposals as to the future of the Team and reports pertaining to the past performance and analysis of the Team were selected. Quality assurance and performance planning documents were identified for analysis, as were sessional recording documents applicable to the user groups from which participants were requested. Financial data from the Team relating to budgets, income and expenditure was identified for analysis. In addition, documents that related to the Authority as a whole were chosen, for example the overarching business plans and more specific departmental and divisional plans.

The general principles of handling documentary sources are no different from those applied to other areas of social research; the data obtained must be handled as scrupulously and as rigorously as any other source (Mogalakwe 2006). The researcher must be prepared to and able to vouch for the authenticity, credibility, representative nature and meaning of the documents selected. Authenticity refers to whether the evidence is genuine and from an impeccable source; credibility refers to whether the evidence is free from error and distortion; representative nature refers to whether the



documents consulted are representative of the totality of the relevant documents and meaning refers to whether the evidence is clear and comprehensible. The researcher therefore had a duty and a responsibility to ensure that any document consulted was genuine and had integrity in the context of the study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2008:201). The ultimate purpose of examining the documents was to arrive at an understanding of the meaning and significance of what the document contained (Scott 1990:28), relative to the Team under study. One can only make sense of the wealth of apparently disparate pieces of data obtained from scrutinising documentary data by situating them within the context of the adventure, learning and processes of the Team. This enabled the data to be ordered and inferences came as a matter of interpretation.

The language of documents subtly orders the reader's perceptions of the subject matter and thus also constructs and creates the social interactions that arise from them. Social texts do not merely reflect or mirror objects, events and categories existing in the social world, but also actively construct a version of those objects, events and categories (Potter and Wetherell 1987). This study explored documents pertaining to the Team and the Authority within which it is situated. The researcher ensured to their own satisfaction before using any document that it was considered accurate and that the author consented to its use in the context of this research, understanding the purpose of the study and the secondary use to which the document would be subjected. The Authority has obviously been in existence for a substantial period, there is therefore a wealth of potential material from which to choose. Similarly, the Team has evolved over a number of years and therefore has generated a substantial volume of data. A practical period to study was determined to be the last five years, as this is the point at which the Team began working from its refurbished base and acquired its current Team Manager. The period selected was also one of

convenience as prior to this time, the Team operated a different bookings and financial system, a different database and the current administration considered it too complex to retrieve earlier data.

Secondary data is, as the name implies, second-hand, it was produced at a different time and for a different purpose to that of the research in question (Richardson 2005:961). It therefore cannot be interpreted in quite the same way as the empirical data that arises from interviewing and participant observation (Denscombe 1998):

Data are produced in a specific context with a specific aim and this will colour them in some way (Boeije 2010:58).

No matter whether primary or secondary research data, the intended outcome and the dissemination mechanism of the document and the targeted audience will influence the manner in which the document is compiled and presented. The relationship of the data to the object to which it purportedly relates is subject to the perception of the author at the time of writing and a function of the author to “effectively communicate what they perceive through language” (Boeije 2010:58). Documents may be biased or inaccurate, just because a document is a public record, it does not mean it is completely factually accurate or impartial. Documentary research plays an important role for the researcher in being:

Used to open up an area of inquiry and sensitize researchers to the key issues and problems in that field (Wellington 2000:113).

The data obtained through the primary sources (interviews and participant observation) was compared and contrasted to verify or nullify that obtained through the secondary data sources. The documents selected were scrutinised for content and analysed per the drafted proforma. As with the interview transcripts and the participant observation recordings, the document proformas were thematically coded, the content being then segregated and amalgamated with that of the interview transcripts and the

participant observation recordings into thematic groups for further enquiry. Where secondary data was quantitative in nature, namely the financial data and figures relating to usage, it was extracted from the operational computer databases. The data was downloaded into a spreadsheet format so that it could be analysed and studied by individual year and subsequently formed into a year-on-year comparison spreadsheet that would produce an overall view of financial and user trends for the Team into pictorial format (Documents 12 to 15 and 17 to 21).

By exploring and examining a wealth of documents and selecting relevant ones for further analysis, the researcher was able to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of the Authority and, specifically, the Team. This enabled a more informed analysis of the data obtained from the interviews and the participant observation through the deeper awareness and knowledge achieved.

### 3.9 Data Analysis

Data analysis entails “segmenting and reassembling the data” (Boeije 2010:93). The data gathered in order to establish a depiction of the Team consisted of words and observations from which order and understanding had to be brought. This process is largely consistent across all data and involves getting to know the data intimately, studying each piece individually to establish its quality and content and relating it to the conceptual framework derived through the literature:

The process is iterative and progressive because it is a cycle that keeps repeating. For example, when you are *thinking* about things you also start *noticing new things* in the data. You then *collect* and *think* about these new things (Seidel 1998)

The more the researcher examined a piece of data, the more meaning was derived from it. The analysis of this data was an inductive process, the vision of the Team growing out of the research process rather than preceding it as a pre-conceived hypothesis to be

(dis)proved. To develop this vision, the data analysis process was iterative, with the researcher visiting and re-visiting each piece of data, clarifying thinking and impressions with each iteration (Silverman 2000). Each piece of data was studied for its content subjected to a coding frame (Gray 2009:348), applying labels to sections so that the data could be reduced to its essential themes. The thematic sections from each piece of data were then collated for comparison, developing the underlying picture of the Team. The analysis of the data gathered around the Team had to take place within a planned structure, a conceptual framework:

A tool to scaffold research and, therefore, to assist a researcher to make meaning of subsequent findings (Smyth 2004);

Explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied – the key factors, concepts or variables – and the presumed relationship among them (Miles & Huberman 1994:18).

A conceptual framework is simply a structure that develops with the data but provides focus and enables the filtering of the raw data and the framework of this research was constructed around that drawn up out of the literature review (see Figure 16):



Figure 16: The framework of analysis for the Adventure Team

Figure 16 is repeated from the literature review to reiterate the elements of analysis. The framework from the literature and also from the researcher having an experienced understanding of the field, enabled the researcher to approach the raw data with a basic, tentative, rudimentary concept of what they were expecting to find concerning the Team, which was considered a far better starting point than having no expectations of the data. The framework then became the basis around which the vision of the Team could be built, the notion of pattern matching (Yin 1994). In initially analysing the data, the framework offered 'silos' for the data, developed around the essential elements identified through the literature of positive adventure practice and learning. The analysis was entirely paper-based. Having never used computer-based data software, and without access to learning or support, the researcher felt disinclined to use a doctoral thesis as the project through which to engage in such learning. The data from each source could thus be broken down into components under these headings, before being amalgamated with all the components from the other sources for further analysis

and for developing the depiction desired of the Team. Once confident that all the relevant messages had been gleaned, the process of categorisation began. The short titles (codes) developed encapsulated the meaning and content of each relevant statement. The statements became separated from the individual document as the statements from all the data were codified and compared to develop a set of conclusions; Boeijs describes this as “the spiral of analysis” (2010:119).

### *3.9.1 Data analysis and interviews*

The initial analysis of the interviews involved listening to each recording several times, firstly to derive a verbatim transcript, which was given to each participant with a request to verify its contents. Transcribing recordings of interviews verbatim is an essential but laborious and time-consuming task:

Verbatim transcription brings home to you that much of what people say is redundant or repetitive (Gillham 2000:71).

Following authentication by the interviewee, the transcript became a working document. The next stage of analysis was to read and re-read each transcript individually to identify the substantive (analytical) statements (Basse 2009). These can never all be extracted at the first attempt, this is a process repeated several times with each transcript to distinguish and detect the principal points of the statement. Each element of the conceptual framework was coded with a particular colour and the input that could be directly related to an element was coded with that colour. Other points raised by the interviewee and queries arising were highlighted for later consideration, so that the researcher could ruminate on the meaning or the underlying point (see Appendix 8). Once each transcript was fully analysed in this way, in its own right, the separate coded sections of all the transcripts were combined and examined, read and re-read, before an overall meaning and outcome ascribed to the

element of the framework. Any issues or points that had not been ascribed to an element were collated and subsequently considered in unison to assess any combined finding.

### *3.9.2 Data analysis and participant observation*

The initial analysis of the observation sessions entailed reading and re-reading the observation proforma and any supplementary notes. Time had allowed reflection on the sessions but the process of reading and re-reading brought these reflections to be supported and enhanced by the recollection of the immediate instance of the moment through the recording:

Looking for patterns, searching for relationships between the distinguished parts and finding explanations for what is observed (Boeije 2010:76).

During each reading, the researcher highlighted salient points and then these points were extracted from the body of the notes and allocated to a thematic code, in the same way as the interview transcripts (see Appendix 9). Each participant observation proforma was evaluated individually under each element of the conceptual framework. The sections of each element from the separate proformas were then brought together to be studied in order to ascertain an overall finding. In this way, commonalities and differences were highlighted and the input became subscribed to the Team, rather than to any particular activity session.

### *3.9.3 Data analysis and secondary data*

Secondary data emanating from documents was recorded initially on the proforma drafted. These were read initially individually, and then subsequently re-read, to ascertain specific points of interest and to extract major relevant themes that would allow the data to be categorised in the same way as the interview and participant observation data. As with the interview analysis, the individual elements of the conceptual framework formed the titles under which each proforma could be analysed (see Appendix 10). Additional and

supporting points were recorded separately for subsequent consideration. Having established the finding relevant per document for each element, the findings were separated from the proforma and combined with the elements of each proforma to determine the overall finding.

Some secondary data input arose from computer analysis in the shape of figures. This input provided supporting information, rather than being analysed under the conceptual framework. The required data for each aspect (such as budget and spend, young people attending) was extracted by financial year, before being brought together to provide an overview and trend for that aspect over a five year period. The period of five years was used because this was the period of the current database system and therefore the figures were obtainable. To have delved further into the past would have been complex and was considered by the researcher as unnecessary in view of the fact the endeavour was to develop a current picture, rather than focus on the past of the Team.

At this stage, after separately analysing the data gathered by each method, the documents became assimilated with the other data materials gathered to begin formulating an overall analysis through seeking out "sense making foci" (Woodside & Wilson 2003:497) to form a comprehensive picture that answered the research questions. The content analysis of thematic codes drawn from the interview transcripts, participant observation and secondary data was finally brought together and integrated into a comprehensive picture of the local authority Team in question. This process may be visualised diagrammatically in Figure 17.



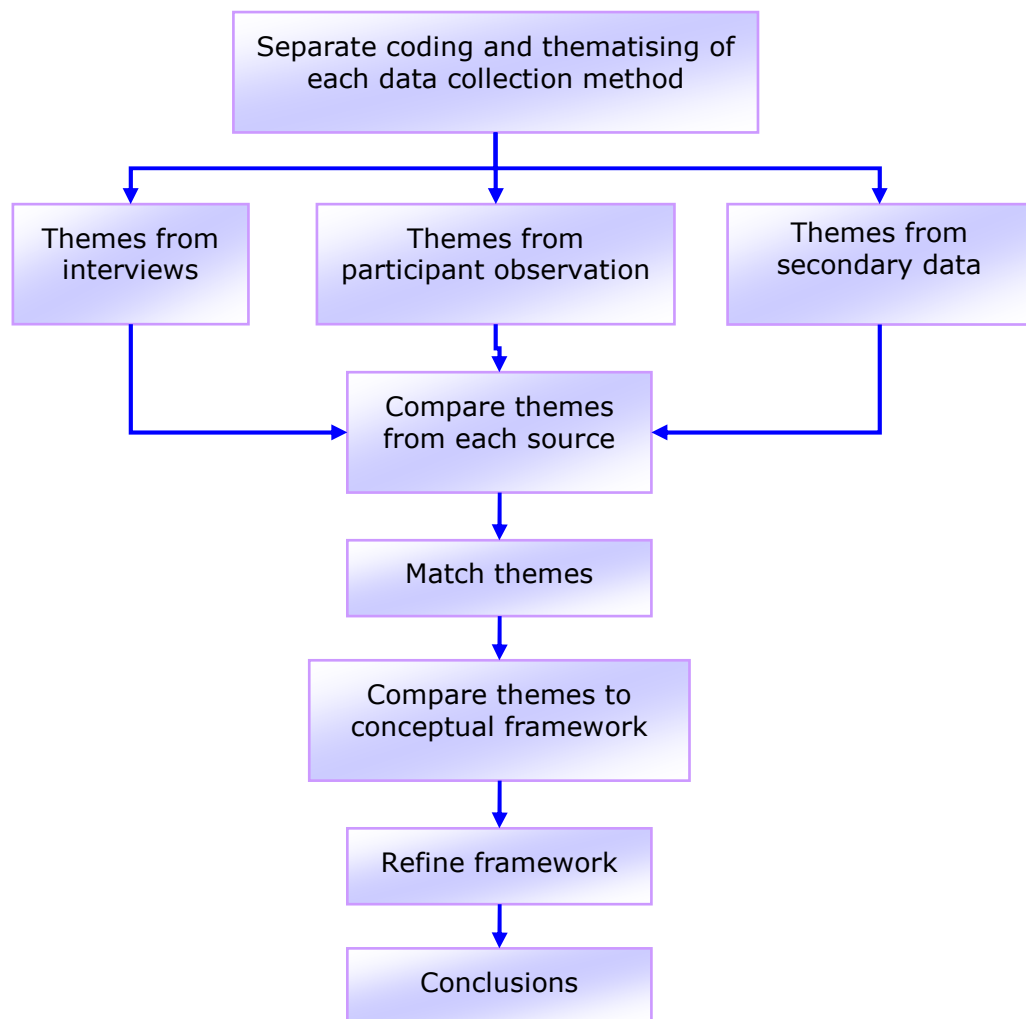


Figure 17: The analysis process

### 3.10 Reliability and validity within research

The outcomes existed in a specific period and it was the function of the researcher to present as plausible and transparent an account as possible:

An account is valid if it represents accurately those features of the phenomena that it is intended to describe, explain or theorise (Hammersley 1992:69)

Plausibility and transparency in qualitative research materialise as validity and reliability. Without some underlying strategy for confirming the claimed outcomes, this study would be nothing more than an unsubstantiated collection of thoughts; the research becomes “worthless, becomes fiction and loses its utility” (Morse, Barrett,

Mayan, Olson & Spiers 2002:1). Qualitative research validity can pose something of an uncomfortable dilemma for researchers of a positivist nature; the “prismatic” (Richardson 2005:963) multiple realities of the constructivists give rise to (naturalistic) emotive and social inductions, rather than (rationalistic) definitive numeric and statistical deductions:

When quantitative researchers speak of research validity and reliability, they are usually referring to a research that is credible, while the credibility of a qualitative research depends on the ability and effort of the researcher (Golafshani 2003:600).

The validity of this research relates to whether the research truly measures “that which it was intended to measure” (Golafshani 2003:599) or how truthful the research results are: namely, a truthful depiction of the Team at the period of data collection. This must be established internally and externally. Internal validity refers to the “causal effect” (Gerring 2007:44) of the research, whether the conclusions drawn are believable. It focuses on the way that the research findings from the data are “grounded in the constructions of those being researched” (Gray 2009:190), founded in the self-reflected criticality of the researcher, namely how the findings are evidenced by the data collected and not the personal opinion of the researcher. Subjective as this is, internal validity simply becomes a question of whether the reader can agree with or at least recognise findings. Dissemination brought recognition of the findings at least in part, offering corroboration and substantiation to the internal validity of the research. External validity (generalisability, universality or transferability) is a progression from this and is the extent to which the research may apply to other conceivably similar situations. Absolute generalisation requires, however, that the comparison be free from situational constraints so that the responsibility of the researcher is more appropriately to provide descriptions in order that successive researchers may determine general applicability for themselves: “statements that have general meaning” (Guba & Lincoln

1981:62). It may be that a reader of the research or a subsequent researcher may identify some elements of familiarity within the findings, which can be acknowledged as a form of broad generalisability. Gillham (2000) defends the uniqueness of the qualitative case study:

Generalization from one group of people to others, or one institution to another, is often suspect – because there are too many elements that are *specific* to that group or institution (Gillham 2000:6).

Guba and Lincoln (1981:61) concur, quoting Cronbach's suggestion that generalisations become less relevant with time and that replication is relative to the similarity of one situation to another:

The onion has many layers, and it is difficult for two people to agree about which layer is to be viewed (Cronbach 1981:116).

Qualitative research is "notoriously difficult to replicate" (Gray 2009:190) and particularly, a single case can only be suggestive of universality, not conclusive (Gray 2004:343):

To identify possible comparison groups, and to indicate how data might translate into different settings and cultures (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2008:137).

The implication is that qualitative research may be never able to be fully replicated, in that every finding from one piece of research may never be repeated in another. There is, however, a substantial probability that some research findings will have resonance with the reader. Here, absolute generalisability is a more questionable goal purely as the study entails a single Team that has never been established to replicate or be replicated by any other. Thus, conclusions may only ever be "fuzzy generalizations" (Bassey 1998:52) and further research would have to be undertaken to establish universality across local authority Teams. There is nothing to say that the findings of this research could not be replicated or that the findings could not apply universally; however, this research simply did not have those concerns. Reliability is an essential goal,

for the research may be repeated in the future or used as the basis for further studies.

Achieving reliability and validity are considered separately achievable and desirable in quantitative studies, whereas qualitative studies tend to merge the two into more nebulous terms such as 'credibility' and 'trustworthiness' (Golafshani 2003). The words all mean the endeavour to establish credence for the depiction of the Team. This is considered "both a science and creative endeavour" (Moss 2004:362), where the science is the obligation to generate authenticity and the creative endeavour is to communicate vicarious experiences. Here, 'trustworthiness' is a more comfortable term as the endeavour is not to identify causal relationships, but to report an image of the single Team in question, and therefore repeatability becomes questionable as the image relates to a bounded view and would change with time and through natural evolution. Equally, no measure has been taken of whether other Authority Adventure Teams should be similarly constructed. That was outside the remit of this study. The test in this respect here is to establish plausibility and credibility for the findings related to this Team. This was found in the dissemination of the findings of this research, as the members of the Team were able to recognise the findings from the case study.

#### *3.10.1 Establishing reliability and validity in interviews, participant observations and secondary data*

When gathering data through interviewing, the best confirmation of trustworthiness is to provide the interviewee with a transcript and request confirmation of the content: "a direct test of the reliability of the observation" (Boeije 2010:177). The interviews offered depth and it was essential to be clear with participants they were affirming the truthfulness of the transcript, they may not agree with conclusions the researcher drew from their words (Boeije 2010, Gerring 2007). Each interviewee was provided with a verbatim transcript of their interview and asked to provide confirmation that it was a true record of the

encounter. The passage of time brought interviewees to read the transcript when they were perhaps in a different emotional state but the agreement at the start with all participants was that they could add to the interview at the transcript review stage but could not withdraw any response. This agreement alleviated any potential subsequent issues.

Similarly, the most appropriate means of endorsement for participant observation is the subjects of that participation. Within the local authority adventure setting, this was most easily done as a part of the summary review at the end of the session, when the young people and their group leaders were all gathered together after completion of the activity. The intent was merely to establish agreement of the observation and so the credibility test was limited to a presentation of the observations made and there was no attempt to draw any conclusions from these observations at this stage. Crucial aspects of a meaningful adventure session are the introduction and the review components. The participant observer took the lead in these portions of the observed sessions, as the content fitted neatly with the objectives of the participant validation. During the introductory phase, the observer prefaced the activity and the observation process, outlining what was to come, expectations and the observation. At the review stage, the observer gave some 'raw' initial feedback through supporting reflection by the group members, group leaders and lead adventure worker on the process, execution and learning from the session.

It is inadvisable to rely solely on secondary data as a method of data collection and this case study was no exception:

For case studies, the most important use of documents is to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources (Yin 2009:103).

Data from documents is valuable but cannot be used in isolation to draw conclusions, as "statistics don't speak for themselves" (Gillham

2000:82) and secondary data must be “subjected to the scrutiny of what it may *mean*” (Gillham 2000:87). Establishing trustworthiness within the secondary data scrutinised within this research entailed comparing the consistency of the secondary data with the other forms of data gathered from the interviews and the participant observation. Reliability of any data collection method relates to the extent of replication. Where qualitative interviews and observations form the data collection, reliability becomes more controversial. Each relates to a specific point in time and hence to the particular prevailing emotional, physical and psychological state of the individual participants. Thus, the *process* may be replicated, but the outcomes may conceivably vary. Secondary data exists in perpetuity and therefore may be re-analysed and interpreted at any time by subsequent researchers. Even with secondary data, subsequent conclusions may vary between researchers.

### *3.10.2 Further establishing reliability and validity in this research*

The common means of ensuring reliability and validity is through *triangulation* (also named resection). The terminology is (somewhat suitably in this research) borrowed from the outdoor world: navigation. A close approximation to a true position is found by reference to two or more identifiable features, establishing a bearing (with a compass) from one’s present location to these features and transferring this as lines onto a map. Navigationally the location is narrowed to somewhere within the intersection of the lines. Methodologically in research studies, the system of triangulation is replicated by comparing one piece of evidence against another. This may be via utilising multiple methods of data collection (such as the interviews, participant observation and secondary data of this study) or gathering data from a range of sources (such as the range of participants engaged in this research: adventure workers, group leaders, managers and young people). Triangulation is a concept refuted by Richardson (2005) as a vain attempt by qualitative

researchers to reach some definitive truth, whereas she argues for a prismatic view, in which the crystal of reality and truth:

Combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensions and angles of approach (Richardson 2005:963).

Yet triangulation is advocated by Brewer as:

A procedure for improving correspondence between the analysis and the 'reality' it is sought to represent faithfully (Brewer 2000:75)

As a practical outdoor navigator, one feels obliged to defend triangulation as actually supporting this concept. It is a process that produces an approximation of a position, as opposed to a definitive point, in the same way that a "prismatic" (Richardson 2005:963) view produces an approximation that allows for differing concepts of reality. Triangulation was achieved through the cross-referencing of the three methods of data collection. By engaging a number of participants at different levels of the organisation and from all aspects of the adventure relationship and by using multiple methods of data gathering, there is a greater likelihood of achieving a true representation of the Team. The responses and notes were compared and contrasted to extract common themes or contradictions and to understand thoughts, feelings, motivations, knowledge and learning. When establishing a finding, the researcher sought data from more than one source and from more than one data collection method. Depending on the nature of the point being made, the finding may be validated through existing in more than one piece of the same type of data collection method (for example two pieces of secondary data) or it may be validated through different types of data collection method (for example in interview and participant observation notes). Member checking (also known as respondent validation) was an important mechanism to ensure trustworthiness.

A final test of credibility was in the form of peer review. Two 'critical friends', both senior members of the organisation under study and both well acquainted with the Team but not directly involved in it, ensured throughout that the research followed its planned process and scrutinised the conclusions drawn to ensure that, from an organisational perspective, the research was plausible, dependable and honourable. Both were approached by the researcher, before their role was approved by the Head of the Youth Service. The two were targeted specifically for the reason that they posed diametrically opposing views to the Team and would therefore challenge and question the approach and the findings rigorously. One was a former team leader and senior manager over the Team who ardently advocates adventure as a tool for formal and informal learning, as well as the vital need to retain a Team within the Authority. The other was a senior manager who had worked up to the position through all levels of the Youth Service, but who held a sceptical and critical opinion of the value of adventure as the panacea solution to the issue of bringing (formal and informal) learning to participants. They were engaged throughout and scrutinised all aspects of the process, data and findings. This method also assured an adherence to ethical standards for the research by independently confirming the principled morality of the research.

### 3.11 Conclusion

The prior preparation of the research allowed the researcher to develop a methodical strategy that mapped out the details of the study. Such advance planning required decisions to be made and brought the researcher to consider philosophical views, ethical stance and worldview (Creswell 2007), as well as how to gather and analyse data. This process also brought the objectivity of the study and its conclusions through the personal perception of the researcher to be contemplated (Denzin & Lincoln 2005). The procedure of devising a pre-determined framework for the study contributed to its credibility



and trustworthiness (Golafshani 2003), whilst acknowledging the limited transferability arising from a single case study (Gilham 2000) and the fuzzy generalisations arising from it (Bassey 1999). This study was defined as constructivist and realist, built through the building blocks provided between the data gathered from the participants and the analysis and interpretation provided by the researcher. The most appropriate vehicle for the study was determined to be a singular in-depth case study (Hancock & Algozzine 2006). The decision was made by exploring and assessing the range of possible approaches and arriving at the conclusion that a case study most appropriately would enable the capturing of reality (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007) and the relationships of the people concerned to the organisation (Gray 2004). This decision, in turn, provided the platform from which to determine exactly how the data would be collected. The data collection design strives for a consensus vision of the Team through polyvocality (Denzin & Lincoln 2003) and was achieved through the participation of the young people, managers, adventure workers and group leaders actually engaging with the Team. Their input was achieved through interviews and through participant observation. As the research involved young people, their position in relation to the adult participants had to be considered (Kay, Cree, Tisdall and Wallace 2003). The data so gathered was supported and enhanced by that collected through secondary data, the documents and computer records that provided a more rounded picture of the Team and its operating procedures. Through developing the research framework, the researcher was able to determine in advance the sampling frame (Gray 2004) and decide the protocol of who would be most appropriate to provide data and how their participation should be invited. It was important to ensure that participation was voluntary and that appropriate informed consent was achieved throughout (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2008). Data gathered was studied and thematically coded (Boeije 2010)

before being compared and contrasted to form the picture achieved: the triangulation of data (Brewer 2000). An essential part of the preparation and planning process was to pilot the whole process in advance of executing the core research study in order to trial the process (Dawson 2002), refine the procedures (Yin 2009) and ensure robustness and appropriateness for the research questions (Creswell 2003). Having arrived at a point where the framework was built, tested and refined where required, and the researcher was confident in the integrity of the study and resulting conclusions, the mainstream research study was undertaken and the devised procedure followed to reach the conclusions drawn.

## Chapter 4: Research FINDINGS

### 4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the initial findings and begin to build a picture of the Team, identifying the findings within the structure of the conceptual framework developed through the literature review. The emergent themes of the conceptual framework form the sections to this chapter. Knowledge of the origins and evolution of the Team is considered essential in understanding the way that the Team operates and the future it potentially currently faces. For the findings to have meaning, they need context, meaning the reader needs to have an understanding of the history of the Team. An outline of the interviews, participant observation sessions and documents studied is located in the Appendices. Here the designation of interviewees (Appendix 2), the type of session observed (Appendix 4) and an outline of the documents (Appendix 6) can be found.

### 4.2 Adventure as a learning provision

The core of the research is learning and the proposition of this thesis is that adventure is a tool to achieve holistic learning in the shape of product (formal) and process (informal) outcomes. The Authority embraced the restructure required to make the Every Child Matters (ECM) (DfES 2003) programme a reality, with the creation of two age-segregated departments: one to deal with young people and one to deal with adults. This brought formal and informal learning together in an unprecedented fashion and began a process of paving the way for new relationships and better communication. For the Team, its clientele and business remained unchanged:

Adventure provides a wide range of activities both on-site and off-site (Document 23);

I think what adventure brings is opportunities for young people to take part in exciting activities that they otherwise would not get chance to take part in (Reese, a manager)

Yet for the Team there was no envisaged change to its activities or way of working. Participants attended as a part of their coursework, but that would be a regular booked activity for the Team or participants attended as part of a youth work programme. The age of participants able to attend and participate in activities remained constant at 13 to 19 years; because of the Team's location under the Youth Service, although this could be changed in future:

Strong service provision could provide the county with cost-effective means of delivery of a number of programmes across the county involving adults as well as young people (Document 28);

The emphasis could be there but we don't catch them early enough for early intervention work (Phoenix, adventure worker).

As a provision of the Youth Service, the Team has worked with a focus on personal development and social education, as youth workers used the Team to achieve their own programme aims and to address their individual neighbourhood issues.

My theory of adventure? We are all better than we know. Kurt Hahn (Devon, adventure worker);

The Outdoor Education & Adventure service works with over 8,500 young people per year (Document 22);

There will always be, no matter how hard one tries, some young people who need more help than others (researcher's own observation notes 6)

ECM (DfES 2003) brought a new awareness of adventure and the Youth Service gained from this awareness through being able to capitalise on better multi-agency working; youth workers moved into schools and began developing 'alternative education' programmes, that enabled young people to build portfolios of achievement and learn in new ways. This brought opportunities for the Team and a realisation of possible future developments:

Physics – what happens when the paddle goes through the water this way, what happens when it goes through that way? (Devon, adventure worker);

Schools can't do it alone – they need to work with others (Document 6);

Adventure skills utilise a variety of practical life and social skills (Participant Observation notes 2).

The Team remained constant in its operations, simply embracing a greater client base, placing emphasis on challenge by choice, where participants are invited (impelled), rather than compelled, to engage: “if they choose to take part, they can” (Phoenix, adventure worker):

Forcing people to do things doesn't promote learning at all (Alex, Adventure Activities Licensing inspector and local authority technical adviser);

Young people should be encouraged to engage in the planning of their outdoor activities and to take maximum ownership (Document 1).

Their voluntary participation opens receptivity to learning. Equally, the invitation may be declined; discussion and negotiation bring the ultimate learning of engaging in an informed choice (Document 1). Although only one of many possible tools, adventure is multi-faceted, it engages the physical as well as the emotional and psychological (Document 4). The greatest potential of the Team is its ability to engage with participants on a deeper level than pure activity delivery: “a location for alternative education and awareness” (Document 23):

There has been a developing need from demand by young people for an area to be as a social/youth club and not just using adventure activities (Document 23);

There's the myth that it's doing them good so we must be doing something right, but when you try to unpack what that is, the skills, knowledge and confidence that lie underneath (Kennedy, a manager);

It's about the workers knowing what it is they are trying to achieve (Alex, Adventure Activities Licensing inspector and local authority technical adviser).

This means using adventure as a means to deliver school syllabi, but also to address individual and personal issues. Each encounter has to be impactful, as only with the Team's own youth clubs do the adventure workers know that they can build an enduring relationship with a young person. Team games are popular, sitting at the lower

end of the scale in terms of 'adventure' and adrenalin challenge, but are in fact at the edge of the comfort zone of many urban participants. Alternatively, more able or confident groups may opt for more demanding activities, such as climbing or kayaking:

I think for young people these days it's not cool to play out ... They don't want to go out and get dirty. So give them opportunities where they can go out and have an adventure (Devon, adventure worker);

There was often a tendency for young people to want to give up when the activity became more challenging, even though they were more than capable of continuing (Participant Observation notes 3).

The principal focus at first contact is to engage participants, to draw them out of themselves, leading participants is a process of influence. Very quickly, the adventure worker has to evaluate the mood, abilities, focus and interactions of the group, whilst simultaneously planning session amendments, organising the group, introducing the activity and checking consent forms for medical details and other issues of relevance. Activities are an excellent opening opportunity for adventure workers to engage in conversations that the participants would not ordinarily get from other encounters. In addition, the activities give the participants the chance to engage in new experiences beyond that which they may expect:

Activities are an excellent 'ice breaker' ... taking a risk should be a fundamental part of growing up (Participant Observation notes 5);

Over recent decades, there has been a notable decrease in children's physical activity (Document 6);

In this type of activity [free play] children can exercise their will to manipulate and discover the environment as they wish (Document 7).

Adventurous activities can engage and stimulate the most recalcitrant young person, by providing adrenalin 'rushes' akin to those of less socially acceptable activities; the aim of adventure is to capture their imagination and harness energy:

Whether we use adventure as a tool to engage or whether we do other things like communication, team building or we use it as a skill activity (Sasha, adventure worker);

I think the thing about adventure is that it has lots of elasticity so it meets multiple agendas (Kennedy, a manager);

Young people challenge what they believe about their own abilities and realise that they are more capable than they think (Document 4).

Adventure enables participants to become self-reliant, understand managed risk and learn how they cope in differing circumstances: "it fulfils a basic human need for experience outside the norm" (Quinn, a group leader). Where young people do not climb (trees) or invent games with friends in their leisure time, it can be a challenging enough experience to try the 'team wall' or 'Jacob's Ladder'. Being reliant upon working with others to succeed may then be extrapolated into helping learn about themselves and implementing this to other areas of their lives (Devon, adventure worker):

How they perceive themselves in relation to the world around them (Document 4).

Commercial providers of outdoor learning adventure opportunities do not have the same altruistic philosophy and therefore cannot offer the same level of personal development or targeted support:

The challenging and rewarding experience of doing something adventurous stays with young people, whatever their abilities (Personal notes, supplementing Participant Observation notes 5).

Challenging activities can be used to address social and neighbourhood issues in that they can be used to tackle urban problems such as gun and knife crime, gang culture or social hierarchies, by bringing groups together who do not normally engage or who would customarily engage on a negative basis:

You can use it to break down issues around gangs and gang culture by bringing people together and doing activities where the activity can be challenging for the

young people and threatening in itself (Finley, a manager);

Group members have to work together (teamwork, communication) to achieve goals set (build confidence, develop self-esteem). Bringing different individuals and groups together in this way can break down barriers, develop social cohesion and build common understanding (Document 39).

Having to communicate and work with people outside of the usual clique means new understandings can be forged and previous cultural and social issues overcome. Similarly, a partnership with health providers can provide activities to address awareness of social issues like childhood obesity, asthma and diabetes: “new ideas for physical exercise and alternatives to ball sports and team games” (Document 5):

Adventure has a big part to play in getting people active and moving around (Kennedy, a manager);

There is a thin line between encouraging young people, pushing them that bit further than they want to go and are comfortable with, and bullying them (Participant Observation notes 3);

Outdoor play replaced to a significant extent by television and computers and an increase in the number of young people driven to school and other places ... this has contributed to the growing problem of childhood obesity and other wellbeing issues (Document 6).

Such transformative cultural initiatives take time and planning, happening within a carefully structured (multi-agency) programme. Participants work in a safe, non-judgemental environment to discover the level of their abilities and build confidence to continue in other environments, such as school physical education. The learning capacity of an adventure programme resides principally in its development and construction. The arbiters of the programme are the workers, who are themselves part of the overarching entity of the Adventure Team, the composition of which is explored in the next section.



### 4.3 The Adventure Team

#### *4.3.1 The history of the Adventure Team*

Data concerning the evolution of the Adventure Team has been drawn from general information documents (Documents 1 to 7), some historical documentation (Documents 22 to 24) and from informal, unrecorded conversations with the study's critical friends, adventure workers and managers. The Team was not established to be a learning provision; it originated in the Youth Service, a supplement to the generic provisions already existing. Adventure was planned as another engagement tool, offering recreational and diversionary activities, in the same way as the Authority's arts provision. Its popularity enabled it to grow but lead to a cycle of needing to generate supplementary income to the budget, which in turn led to a need for expansion to deal with more user groups to generate the additional income required. This cycle brought relationships external to the Youth Service and more associated with formal learning provisions. A 2002 declaration by the Department of Education and Skills (DfES) that 5% to 12% of Sports and Physical Education funding should be spent on adventurous activities offered new opportunities for the Team to develop the educative aspect further. The declaration also provided the impetus for funding bids to enable bespoke facilities to be built and the Authority committed to this endeavour. The result was a £1.4m flagship adventure base, offering a range of land and water activities and the launch of a provision aimed at legitimately delivering both formal and informal learning through adventure. The evolution of the Team caused it gradually to drift from the core of youth work as its focus broadened to wider group interests. Culturally the Team withdrew from the Authority, becoming isolated and adventure workers developed a social closeness, with members building an informal peer culture.

The Team to date has consisted of three urban adventure bases and a satellite base used for the provision of sailing. Early in 2010, the

decision was taken to reduce this to two adventure bases. The provision offers land and water activities, both on and off site. The Team consists of four full-time adventure workers, with an additional eight full-time equivalent casual and seasonal posts. Unless a group is going off-site, any activity is delivered within a two-hour session; including the time changing clothes, kit issue, briefing and review. Session times are fixed, to allow three sessions per day, to make staff leadership and timetabling easier. Table 1 shows the figures for the attendances of each type of user group, and Table 2 converts this to a percentage of the total adventure usage (figures drawn from Documents 12 to 15).

	County	Out of County	Own Youth Groups	Social Services	Statutory Youth groups	Total attending
2004-05	3,875	306	1,998	674	1,220	8,073
2005-06	2,297	23	1,053	1,278	633	5,284
2006-07	3,849	236	1,348	1,619	1,815	8,867
2007-08	4,793	494	2,699	773	1,564	10,323
2008-09	6,777	450	3,183	1,234	1,482	13,126
2009-10	5,828	503	2,326	913	2,084	11,654
						57,327

Table 1: Attendance by user group

	County	Out of County	Own Youth Groups	Social Services	Statutory Youth groups
2004-05	48.0%	3.8%	24.7%	8.3%	15.1%
2005-06	43.5%	0.4%	19.9%	24.2%	12.0%
2006-07	43.4%	2.7%	15.2%	18.3%	20.5%
2007-08	46.4%	4.8%	26.1%	7.5%	15.2%
2008-09	51.6%	3.4%	24.2%	9.4%	11.3%
2009-10	50.0%	4.3%	20.0%	7.8%	17.9%

Table 2: Attendance by user group as a percentage of the total

The adventure provision is modern and well equipped and the provision is fortunate to be able to offer easy access to land and water activities on and off site. The Team remains busy year-round, with an obvious spike in demand over the summer period. Analysis of the division between school groups and youth groups is not possible from the data held by the Team database. Those who do engage with the provision have a natural propensity themselves towards engagement in adventure on a personal level, whether or not

they actually participate in the session when their group undertakes an activity. At present, the provision only has one session a week of its own youth club at each of two adventure bases. The issue of facilities is debatable; the image of the provision is (for some) extremely important:

Whether they use it is irrelevant – it's about young people feeling valued and thinking that they are getting something that is high quality (Rowan, a manager);

[name of adventure base] is clearly a flagship facility having recently benefited from a £1.4 million investment (Document 9).

The opposing viewpoint is that facilities are irrelevant, the outcomes are of fundamental importance:

It doesn't have to be complex; we don't have to be swinging off the Aiguilles de Midi or whatever to get the outcomes we want (Finley, a manager);

Competition should be used as a spur to encourage young people to strive to do their best, and having done so, to take pride in their achievements (Document 1);

I think that the rebuild was not thought through properly. I think it was exciting to get lots of capital money, but when you look at the Youth Service provision, count the number of youth groups going through, I think that's actually decreased rather than when it was the scruffy old building that it used before (Rowan, a manager).

The facilities are important in the initial perception that any (potential) user will gain of a provision and may make the individual want to return. However, what is really of fundamental importance is the way in which the facilities are used to effect outcomes. Modern and expensive equipment is irrelevant if use of the equipment is ineffective and positive outcomes are not achieved. It is incumbent upon the leadership of the Team to ensure that the provision not only has the physical ability to deliver to a high quality but also that the adventure workers are motivated and committed to performance at a high standard.

In 2004, the decision was made that management had become too big for one person. The Team was split into the two parts that exist now: an Adventure Team and a Work with Schools Team. The division distinction revolves around responsibility. The Adventure Team deals with groups that attend with their own staff in a pastoral role, where the adventure workers have responsibility solely for the activities. The Work with Schools Team workers deliver to those excluded from school; they have total responsibility for the young people, collecting them from home or school, undertaking all pastoral care and activities and returning them home at the end of the day. A consequent distinction exists in the constitution of staff: the Team workers are activity oriented, with little or no youth work awareness or experience; the Work with Schools workers are essentially youth workers with adventure experience and qualifications. Financially, the Team has an allocated budget from the Youth Service to fund staff and running costs and must generate any remaining requirement; the Work with Schools Team starts with a deficit budget of staff and running costs, and then has to raise the funds through contracts to cover these. This research centres on the Adventure Team. Table 3 shows a timeline of the evolution of the Team; this has been developed from general information documents (Documents 1 to 7), historical documentation (Documents 22 to 24) and conversations with critical friends, adventure workers and managers.

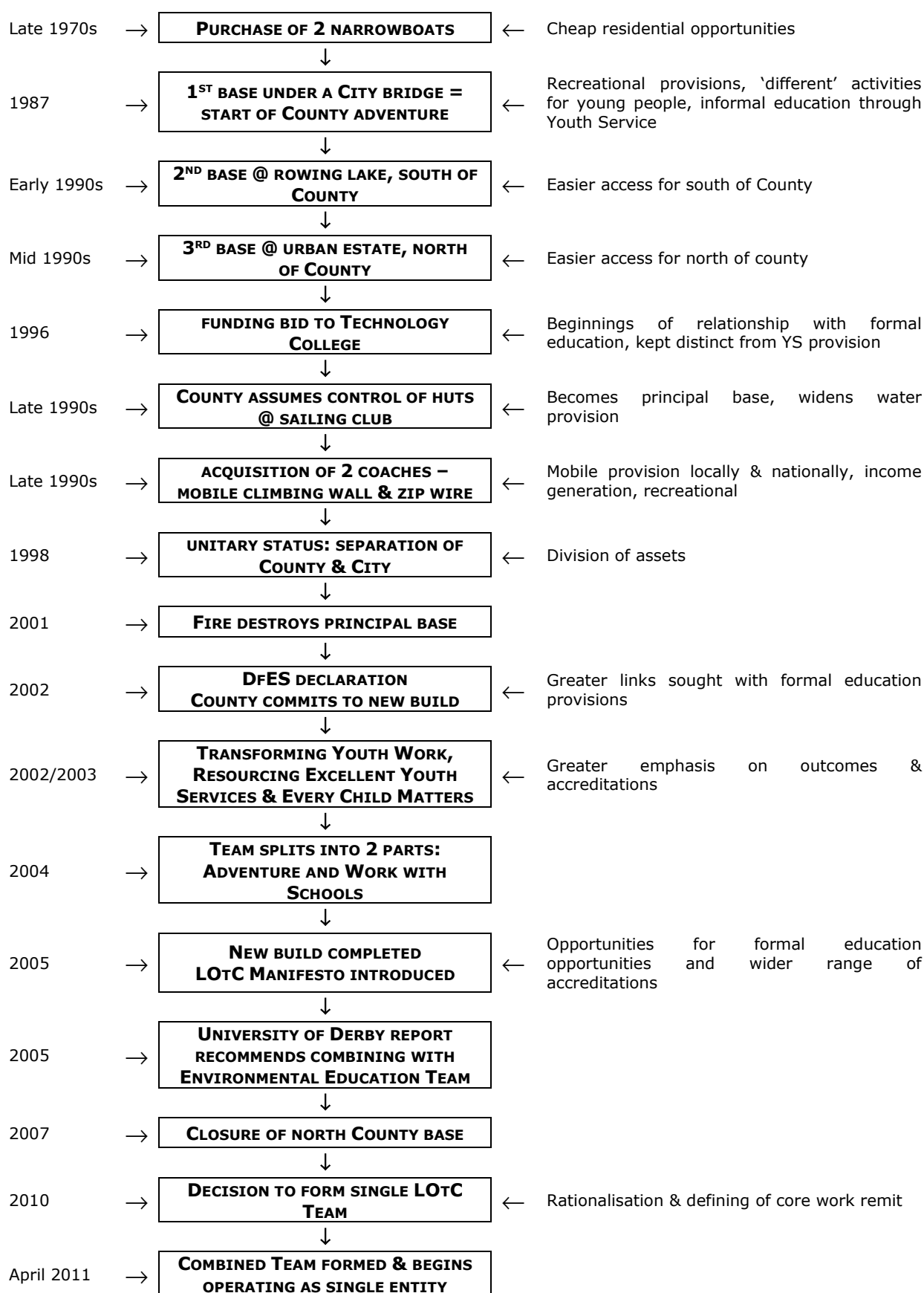


Table 3: Timeline of the evolution of the Adventure Team

Separately to the Team, a provision had evolved within the Education Department that encompassed adventure and environmental education opportunities, arranged through schools. Commonalities became apparent between the Youth Service Adventure Team and the Environmental Education Support Service (EESS) (Document 9 and interview with Harper, a manager). An external study advocated strengthening the provision overall “as ‘learning’ describes a broader offer than ‘environmental education’ does” (Document 9:66), with a merger of the Adventure Teams as a structural means to encourage closer integration and developing effective partnerships (Document 9, Document 37). The option of a full merger of the Adventure Teams was initially discarded as too complex and was fiercely resisted by the leader of each provision. However, the proposal made synergetic sense and that decision was subsequently reversed, towards the end of this study; the decision reinforces the unity of formal and informal learning opportunities by combining provisions founded in both the Education Department and the Youth Service. The decision also emphasises the commitment of the Authority to the Team:

This is not a failing service about which something must be done – this is a valued and respected service (Document 9);

In terms of numbers, it makes a significant contribution to the Service’s recorded and accredited outcomes. As far as the positive activities agenda is concerned, again they make a significant contribution to the offer and to the County Council’s kind of offer. The team also makes a significant contribution – although it kind of goes unmeasured if you like – to the attendance and behaviour strategies that there are within the local authority (Reece, a manager).

Bringing the Adventure Team into one unit with the former Environmental Education Support Service is seen to offer the opportunity to develop a strong, coherent Team with a common direction and a unity of purpose, which will direct the Team culture closer to that of the Authority. The move was completely away from the perceived future the workers had for themselves:

I can see us constantly reducing (Sasha, adventure worker);

It's hard to see us not becoming either completely privatised or a not for profit trust outside the Youth Service (Phoenix, adventure worker).

In all variations of their perceived future, the existing culture was not challenged. Until recently, the Team did not have an established remit to be anything other than a recreational provision offering opportunities to try activities that are not readily available in urban communities (Document 1, Document 27). The recognition of a union of formal and informal learning opportunities through the tool of adventure has arisen more recently through the need to develop relationships that would offer stability for the provision, more than a conscious recognition of adventure as a tool of learning. A further disruption to the Team *status quo* arose at the May 2010 general election.

#### *4.3.2 The Adventure Team since May 2010*

To understand and locate the Team in the present, it is necessary to revert to literature and recent national events. This research began under a Labour Government and landmark policies (in terms of this research) were embodied in the 'Every Child Matters' (ECM) (DfES 2003) agenda, 'Learning Outside the Classroom' (LotC) (DfES 2005) and 'Aiming High for Young People: a ten year strategy for positive activities' (DCSF 2007). In May 2010, the general election brought a Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition to power. Since that time, much of the terminology and some of the guidance have been revoked, but not the underlying principles: "There is no lack of focus on Every Child Matters" (Puffett 2010). No new documentation has yet been produced to replace the philosophies above and therefore, for consistency, the terms continue to be used and the documents referred to here. An unprecedented level of national debt brought the coalition Government to instigate a spending review (HM Treasury 2010). In order to bring down the level of debt and stabilise the

country, wide ranging and swingeing public sector cuts were announced:

That what we buy, we can afford; that the bills we incur, we have the income to meet (Osborne 2010).

This Authority, like all others, faced exceptional political pressure and prepared plans of savings across its services. The Children's and Young People's Department was amalgamated with others, reducing 8 Service Directors and 28 Heads of Service down to 4 Service Directors and 18 Group Managers. The underlying prevailing philosophy is that if a provision is not statutorily required, then there has to be a strong case for retaining it. The Youth Service suffered the loss of 45 from 88 posts, saving 26% of its net budget, a total of £1,868,000 over four years (Document 29). The intention of the Youth Service was to:

De-layer its management and administrative structures to ensure that resources are concentrated on delivering positive activities directly to young people in the evenings and weekends (Document 29);

What I think it could do is be much more involved in the local districts where the bases are (Rowan, a manager).

The intention was that a more streamlined provision could work more flexibly, build partnerships that are more effective and less targeted:

More time spent on fun activities delivered to a wider age range of young people at times when they are most needed (Document 29);

I am still confident that what we deliver is good news and what we deliver is with large groups of young people who get an instant gratification out of it (Sam, a manager).

The consequence for the Team was a decision that there should be no change to the provision offered, rather a rationalised amalgamation, integrating similar resources, to be used in a more cost-effective way, which no doubt contributed to the decision to merge the two adventure provisions:



Our value base will not be affected by changes in how we deliver and badge our work with young people (Document 31);

We will work together to provide integrated services for all children and young people in [the County] aged 0 – 19 to improve their life chances and help them maximise their potential (Document 24);

We've got to look at what's relevant in the world that we live in now and the environment that we live in now and adapt accordingly (Finley, a manager)

Within the service review, the new Learning Outside the Classroom Service proposed to make 40% savings "over a 4 year period through cost-saving and income-generating activities" (Document 28), a total of £718,000. This is not necessarily the end of the savings measures for the provision:

A review will be undertaken in Autumn 2010 to explore more cost effective management models for enrichment provision and linkages with related provision elsewhere within the Council (Document 28);

The reality is that there are barriers and hurdles out there. And the barriers and hurdles at present are a combination of financial and other issues (Kennedy, a manager).

From the decision to combine the two adventure provisions, it is clear that the Authority is committing to the Team but the decision, alongside the origins of this study, demonstrates there is an effort to strengthen the Team's leadership, which had not always been robust, as the next sub-section shows.

#### *4.3.3 Leadership and management*

It seems logical that the leadership of the Authority should have an awareness of the Team's objectives, as these should be shaped by Authority objectives. Some members of the Senior Management Team have a good awareness of how adventure may be used:

It's about educational opportunities for young people, using the outdoors as a tool (Sam, a manager);

It can bring a quiet withdrawn person out and give them the life skills they need to function as a valued member of a family and of society (Reese, a manager);

Strong service provision in the arts and outdoor education could provide the County with cost effective means of delivery of a number of programmes across the County involving adults as well as young people (Document 28).

However, there is no real consensus as to how or where the Team is best located within the Authority:

It fits in as a provider (Sam, a manager);

So it's another youth work Team within the Youth Service (Reese, a manager);

The development of Integrated Youth Support approaches ... requires the Youth Support Service to seek an increasingly cost effective way to deliver its services (Document 29).

Leadership admits that there has been no strategic direction, no "clear youth offer" (Document 36):

I think if more people were involved in the management and direction of it, then it would improve (Rowan, a manager);

The reality of the situation is that until relatively recently the management of the Team has been unconstrained and it has been able to develop itself and its projects in a self-contained way (Reese, a manager);

They need to become more a part of the whole process rather than people just popping their heads in the door then going again (Finley, a manager)

The Service Manager directly responsible has not had (nor wanted) support or input from the rest of the Senior Management Team:

I oversee the Adventure Team ... I have the service management role on behalf of the Youth Support Service, no-one else (Sam, a manager);

I don't think that there are strategic objectives for Adventure (Reese, a manager);

Employees will only feel engaged in the services they work on if they are given every opportunity to influence

the way they are changed or modernised ... the Council looks to tap into expertise and knowledge (Document 32).

There has been a sense cultivated amongst the Senior Management Team that 'adventure' is an alien beast, outside their comfort zone and professional experience, something of which they do not, and could not, have any understanding. Communication appears to have been lacking between the Team, their direct manager and with others of the leadership team:

Other senior managers don't understand adventure (Sam, a manager);

Only certain people can understand adventure and manage it (Rowan, a manager);

This interviewee stated: "environmental education is 'education', adventure is going off having fun climbing" (Document 9).

Any collective is shaped by the philosophies of its leadership, which appears a crucial weakness within this Authority in respect of the Adventure Team. The Senior Management Team recognises that there needs to be change. There is support for the provision and recognition of the meaningful outcomes possible; however, there is a realisation that there has been leadership neglect:

[The] Council should be exploring how front and back offices and management teams can be better shared (Document 32);

[The future] will focus on the priority of ensuring our business and financial management practices and performance are as effective as possible (Document 2);

I'd say that the workers who currently work in Adventure work to the best of their ability, but I think their direction is sometimes where we fall down (Rowan, a manager).

The leadership of the Authority exists on the cusp between elected members making policy decisions and the adventure workers who implement them. The continual conflict of time between strategic overview, leadership and operational management is unending. The need to maintain political awareness and equilibrium puts that

division into uneven balance, "supporting democratic governance by supporting Councillors" (Document 30):

Government sets a direction of travel that we must acknowledge (Document 3);

It's a delicate balance (Kennedy, a manager);

It's constantly fire fighting. You have to rely on the tiers above and below you being competent and doing their job (Rowan, a manager).

As a result, focus often rests on 'getting the job done' rather than leadership, where a Team does not cause problems it can fade from focus. The consequence of the lack of leadership has been that the Team has become very much the creation of itself and the experience and predisposition of the Team Manager. Where previously the incumbent was a youth worker, veering towards personal development and social education, the current Manager has a social work background and a proclaimed lack of interest or understanding of youth work. The Team has become a maverick entity, no longer fully understood or accepted:

I think it is managed as a business to provide activities on a sessional basis (Rowan, a manager);

Adventure being pigeonholed by someone outside as opposed to someone who truly understands it (Phoenix, adventure worker);

Sometimes people decide to chop down the forest before they trim the branches or know what's going on deep on the inside (Dana, a group leader);

The inspection system uses the Ofsted framework as its basis and places particular emphasis on achievement, standards and the quality of education provided (Document 25).

Although the Team survived with this identity, the secondment of the Service Manager and the enforced strategic review by the Council of its services and structure has brought the Team to be considered by a wider range of leadership than has previously been the case, bringing a better understanding for others of what the provision is about:

Expanding the opportunities offered ... to promote curriculum-based programmes designed to address specific needs, promote experiential learning (Document 37);

[Adventure] doesn't see its own potential in the bigger scheme of things (Kennedy, a manager)

Combining the two adventure provisions will bring greater leadership potential and raise the profile of the Team within the Authority. The workers, however, are comfortable with their current existence but may benefit from the injection of fresh opportunities, as seen below.

#### *4.3.4 The adventure workers*

There are four full-time workers within the Adventure Team and a range of casual workers available to work as required. All workers hold National Governing Body (NGB) qualifications, to instructor level in the activities they deliver and to a lower standard in activities they support; a worker holding the British Canoe Union (BCU) instructor award and the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) Assistant Instructor Award will lead in canoe and kayak sessions, but support a senior instructor in sailing. To date, recruitment to the Team has focussed upon adventure workers having relevant activity qualifications with no focus on wider training. Although some Team members are currently engaged in youth work training, this is because of an enforced contractual obligation, as opposed to the workers having an awareness or understanding of how or why this could be valuable (Document 1). This training is theoretically supported by placements in alternative work venues (generic youth provision) and 'professional' supervision sessions (by someone holding a diploma or degree in youth work). However, the adventure workers seem to the researcher to engineer completion of placement through adventure projects, rather than experience other forms of youth work. None of the adventure workers is receiving supervision from a 'professionally' qualified youth worker, and without this, the training becomes almost a meaningless exercise, as any teaching cannot be reinforced or

consolidated within the Team or within personal practice. This is evidenced by the absolute lack of real knowledge of the theoretical underpinnings of informal learning:

I don't even know what that means! (Toby, adventure worker);

Theory? There's the theory attached to a known course, otherwise it's quite hard to answer (Sasha, adventure worker);

By reflecting on and reviewing an experience they are better able to understand and process its meaning (Document 4);

This is just one of a continual 5-week cycle, 4 days a week for the same school and the same worker, so Toby is delivering the same activity every day for a week. Although the group members vary each day within that week, they are the same over the 5 weeks, so he becomes 'snow blind' and the programme becomes increasingly less effective as he becomes increasingly bored (Participant Observation notes 8).

The adventure workers came into the provision because of a natural propensity for the activities, as opposed to recognising a vocational calling or considering this a professional career:

It's a huge part of my life, always has been and always will be (Harper, a manager);

I was in the scouts and I was in the cubs and therefore I was lucky enough to be able to go walking quite a bit and camping quite a bit (Devon, adventure worker).

Not only must the workers be trained and qualified in their activities, they must have the ability to engage with participants and communicate with them meaningfully:

The common thread is the focus on positive outcomes in personal and social education (Document 1);

Hard skills are nothing without soft skills – technical competence is nothing in a professional capacity if you can't interact empathically (Alex, Adventure Activities Licensing inspector and local authority technical adviser);

The learning is only transferable if young people are aware of it. Outdoor learning must be about the

process, not just the activity (Participant Observation notes 2);

The focus is on activities and keeping young people as occupied as possible with no opportunity for conversation or relaxation (Participant Observation notes 7).

The interviews showed adventure workers mainly began with seasonal or casual work with commercial organisations before entering the Authority. The lack of informal learning training has led to a focus on a product, rather than a process curriculum:

Our shortcoming has been that we have become so geared towards the delivery of the activity, for a multitude of reasons, that we have lost sight of the wider developmental process (Kennedy, a manager);

One argued that there may be a mismatch between the objectives of youth workers and adventure staff (Document 9);

It is Adventure's intention to operate skill based water activities sessions targeting accreditation (Document 23).

This lack of embedding of the philosophy underpinning adventure and lack of strategic direction from above means that there is no real location of the Team in the wider Youth Service or Authority: "we don't fit comfortably" (Sasha, adventure worker).

We have negotiated five of the county teams leaving so we can concentrate on NI110 (Document 31);

I think at the moment it's a bit of an uneasy marriage (Devon, adventure worker);

I suppose I think the key aims for us are to offer young people choices (Phoenix, adventure worker).

There is a relaxed approach to delivery of activities, with much taken for granted in the expectation that adventure workers can and will deliver competently and at a standard considered acceptable of Authority employees. However, there is no defined sessional structure to which adventure workers can refer; equally, there are no lesson guides on the learning to be drawn from activities:

Managers favoured structured activities, whereas practitioners favoured unstructured activities (Document 7);

I give them the freedom to go out and deliver the sessions as they want ... at the end of the season, I can sit back and say there've been no major incidents, no major accidents and the staff member is still speaking to me, so it's been a success (Phoenix, adventure worker);

It seems to be very much a case of session-by-session activities, with no development planned for the activity (Participant Observation notes 5).

There is a very reactive approach; an annual 'adventure guide' is produced, distributed around the Youth Service. Regular contracts, for example with Social Services groups, are chased for renewal. There is, however, no proactive approach of actively promoting activities, although the value is recognised by some:

Essentially the same activities were repeated on a daily basis and all YP knew what to expect, what to do. There was no variation to the routine, the activities, the process: three activities out of raft build, sail, kayak, canoe/katakanoe (Participant Observation notes 7);

There is no better way than to demonstrate to them, to show them, whether that be visual aids one night in the youth club or through the internet or putting them in a minibus and just bring them along ... Get them to taste it, get a role model, get some kit in to show them (Sam, a manager);

People tend to buy us in to deliver something that they can take back and use in a way we don't know (Sasha, adventure worker);

Ultimately, the workers see the booklet and that's what they have (Phoenix, adventure worker).

The approach is very much to wait for potential service users to initiate contact and to meet the agendas of other people's programmes:

If it's not an accredited course, then we rarely know what people want out of it (Sasha, adventure worker);

They don't want to tell you what their young people are like and don't want to come down here for anything



other than a little bit of respite and they come down here to use you as a babysitter (Dylan, adventure worker);

Young people were not briefed by anyone of either staff group at any point as to the aims of the day or the point of the activities (Participant Observation notes 4).

The Team has developed organically, more at the whim of the prevailing adventure workers' will, with little oversight from the hierarchy. There is no real sense of understanding of the potential or application of informal learning within the Team, no youth work ethos towards informal learning but a frustration as to what is perceived as poor quality of adventure by workers who want to be working at a different level:

What we deliver is dumbed-down adventure (Phoenix, adventure worker);

The staff that work with these young people come down and go "there you are, do the adventure" (Jess, adventure worker);

Your boredom shows through to the young people, how you feel is how the session goes really (Toby, adventure worker);

Delivering potentially 4 days per week to the same organisation at the same stage of the programme because each week is one consistent activity across the board (Participant Observation notes 8)

The majority of sessions are 'one off' taster sessions or basic, low-level qualification courses, such as the British Canoe Union (BCU) one star Award. Whilst adventure workers are required to hold instructor grade qualifications, they have little or no opportunity to utilise them; skills unused become forgotten or rusty:

Instructors are as infallible as anyone else, they are human and they get bored or lazy (Alex, Adventure Activities Licensing inspector and local authority technical adviser);

It's important to allow members to develop an environment to build on people's experiences and allow them to grow (Harper, a manager);

In realising [our] vision, we seek to deliver a workforce for the future that

- Puts the needs of children and young people first and strives to achieve the best outcomes
- Is competent, confident and safe to work with children and young people
- Is flexible, effective and efficient in its working practices

(Document 3);

For future outperformance, the Service needs to: 1) ensure medium and long-term financial viability (KRA 1) as well as 2) continuing to improve educational attainment (KRA 2) to compete with external providers and ensure a strong pool of returning customers; and 3) search for new products and markets to increase income (KRA 3) (Document 37).

The state of mind, job stimulation and satisfaction, and inherent interests of adventure workers are important in how they engage, but equally their personal narrative is crucial to their approach, how they help participants deal with issues and progress:

The core staff offering environmental, outdoor and adventurous education in both teams are highly experienced, well qualified, dedicated and professional (Document 9);

Our understanding is that the instructor relationship enhances learning, particularly in developing more mature and respectful relationships with others (Document 4);

Like anything if you've got experience of things already and have resolved something before, you've got a systematic approach to a problem, then it ceases to be so much of a problem (Devon, adventure worker);

They have no sort of vision of where they want to go, as long as they're getting the new trainers, to match their mates (Jess, adventure worker).

Delivery and activities are run to a routine pattern. The large number of one-off sessions, limited way the database works and lack of habitual quality assurance means adventure workers have no record of accomplishment. Adventure workers generally feel that they are being de-skilled by the low grade they are being required to deliver

and lack the autonomy to develop innovations to maintain a high degree of motivation and technical competence:

Only allowed to appear faintly when we are allowed to put together more holistic programmes, and those are so rare (Phoenix, adventure worker);

You've got to be very inventive in the games you play and try to make it different for yourself, otherwise you get bored (Toby, adventure worker);

The new initiatives tend to be put on the back burner (Sasha, adventure worker).

The experiences of participants are of little value if there is no work to help them realise what they learned and explore transferability. Adventure workers need to be trained in how to do this, as with any other skill, and they need the opportunity to practice reflexion in their own work. People learn best and most when they are having fun, but they are not always able to fully realise the extent of their learning without some support. The most powerful programmes arise when the educators know something of the participants, which emanates from multi-agency working, liaising with group leaders and gaining vital base details to enable appropriate direction of the programme.

#### *4.3.5 Partnerships*

The relationship that adventure workers have with the group leaders is vital in determining the fullest success of the session. At the very least, each party must be clear as to their role and sessional contribution:

There's the pure thrill of the activity, taking part, and then on from that there's how we can use that to engage young people in wider learning. But that only works in my view if its part of a wider package (Finley, a manager);

Pre-working is essential – finding out what people like before exposing them to the experience. That's where joint working comes in (Alex, Adventure Activities Licensing inspector and local authority technical adviser).

No clear answer arose as to whether it is lack of theory knowledge or simply culture, but adventure workers tend not to launch sessions with what learning may be derived from the activity. "Yes, assumptions are made" (Phoenix, adventure worker) that accompanying group leaders have already prepared the group and will take care of any detailed review subsequently. The adventure worker often has no real knowledge of the wider programme aims of the group:

The Adventure staff have no idea of the issues, needs or abilities of the young people so are operating blindly (Participant Observation notes 8).

The information provided by group leaders about the group should determine session content and degree of difficulty. Each session lasts only two hours, so the session has to be a fine balance between group ability, comfort zone, interest and outcomes. Sometimes group leaders are completely honest about group issues and the aims of the wider group programme. Where groups are more challenging, leaders often avoid openness:

They don't want to tell you what their young people are like and don't want to come down here for anything other than a little bit of respite (Jess, adventure worker);

There has been no apparent discussion or planning between the Adventure staff and the teaching staff. (Participant Observation notes 8);

It's a really important area of information sharing that the group leaders are open to the workers so that they can know and plan adequately (Kennedy, a manager).

Communication in a functioning partnership fosters positive working, openness and honesty:

To create focus on complex problems and find practical ways to tackle these through stronger leadership and collaborative working (Document 32).

Once the group is at the adventure base, it is too easy for group leaders to withdraw. This leads to a number of assumptions by the group leaders in what happens:

I think all of the trainers here do the prep before the activity starts, don't they? (Dana, a group leader);

I think the workers did it in the first session at the base (Jules, a group leader);

The group had no idea what lay ahead of them so everything was a revelation. Some advance work ... may have helped quell some of the excitement and support the activities getting going a lot faster (Participant Observation notes 1).

The participants will enjoy a more meaningful session if they know that their workers are supportive of them, watching them, experiencing the session alongside them:

They know these young people a lot better, they know the kind of issues and they can put things across and encourage them in the right way (Devon, adventure worker);

A successful future service would be "*more of the same*" but with enhancement such as greater engagement of the voluntary sector (Document 9).

Between the assumptions of Team members and group leaders, the participants are not being given the most comprehensive learning provision possible. All organisations have objectives and these are not being achieved in the most positive way if the parties to a multi-agency relationship are not communicating and working together in the most constructive way. Achievement of objectives is a crucial performance measure for the Authority, which is driven by Government policy.

#### *4.3.6 External factors*

The existence of the Team within the Youth Service team and the larger Authority brings external pressures in the shape of Government initiatives and scrutiny, which form the drivers of programmes and priorities within the Team and the Authority. This is not lost on leadership, but their perception of its importance varies:

I think the key drivers are adventure and getting young people to do adventurous activities (Sam, a manager);

The whole agenda around positive activities ... is going to change the whole ethos and delivery of adventure (Rowan, a manager);

I think it's driven by the need to generate income (Reese, a manager);

Government policy I think is offering a very positive push to do the things we're talking about (Harper, a manager).

The ultimate result of the external drivers is to shape internal policies and procedures:

Health & safety is absolutely paramount and we'd be negligent and culpable if we didn't follow policies and procedures (Finley, a manager);

[The Authority] faces ongoing, significant and unavoidable increases in demand for key services. At the same time, it faces an unprecedented and long-term reduction in the resources available to it (Document 34).

The result of external drivers is to shape the way adventure workers perceive their role and the freedom within it to deliver and develop the programmes they would like:

You know the only reason we started to structure one star and stage one courses was because we wanted to give people accreditations they could take away and so we could have multiple contacts (Phoenix, adventure worker);

The thing at the moment is that we're limited to the accredited outcome being the be all and end all ... Some things, like my own experiences, those softer skills are important (Kennedy, a manager);

Obviously you know where your wage comes from and so you know you need to deliver in line with what they want (Dylan, adventure worker);

I think that some of the powers that be don't really understand the front line delivery (Devon, adventure worker).

The perception of the adventure workers of their (lack of) liberty to shape programmes is derived from their relationship with the leadership and the organisation. Ultimately, the Team is not a

statutory provision and its longevity relies on the Authority committing finances to sustain it.

#### 4.3.7 *The financial perspective*

Financially, the Team has been fortunate to enjoy budget increases annually in excess of increases in expenditure. The effect of this has been that the external income to be generated has decreased accordingly. Table 4 shows the budget against actual spend for the past five years (data drawn from Document 17 to 21):

	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Core budget	47,193	57,888	62,784	83,999	132,354	249,764
Change % on previous year		23%	8%	34%	58%	89%
Staff pay	225,984	237,231	272,685	282,945	336,772	314,057
Running costs	54,260	65,029	121,948	175,713	153,100	181,972
New equipment	10,378	19,702	18,682	9,370	11,309	18,409
	290,622	321,963	413,315	468,028	501,181	514,438
Change % on previous year		11%	28%	13%	7%	3%
Income generation requirement	243,429	264,075	350,531	384,029	368,827	264,674
As % of budget	516%	456%	558%	457%	279%	106%

Table 4: Budget, expenditure and income generation

Increasingly over recent years, the activities of the Team have fallen closer to being more within its core budget allocation, meaning less pressure to income generate, but the requirement remains at a substantial amount over the core budget. Figure 18 shows the income generation requirement falling as core budget has increased, within the overall costs of the Team (data drawn from Documents 17 to 21).

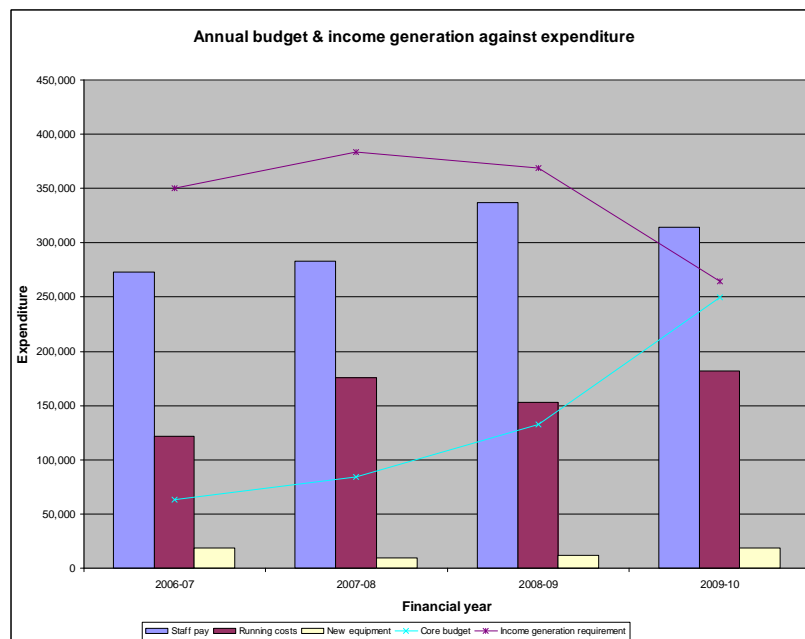


Figure 18: Annual budget & income generation against expenditure

The Team operates on a break-even basis, aiming to generate sufficient income to meet the deficit between core budget and expenditure needs. This brings an almost insoluble dilemma. The new-build dictates high staff and equipment costs, therefore a sustained high maintenance cost. This cost is only partially met from budget; the remainder is chased through income generation. In itself, this makes the Team a quasi-commercial, not-for-profit organisation, a position that conflicts with underlying principles.

Pupil referral units, schools, colleges, they use it far more but that is about income generation rather than youth work (Rowan, a manager);

The financial constraints are very real and adventure costs – the maintenance of the equipment, the maintenance of the equipment, the level of instructors you need to deliver this, a lot of the equipment and skills are specialist (Kennedy, a manager);

Clubs can buy in packages ... to meet targets in terms of youth engagement (Document 9);

Schools and/or families will face increased charges or introduction of new charges for services currently provided (Document 28).

The greatest threat perceived for the future is that adventure is an expensive provision to maintain:



We might have to prioritise the things that are most important to us in terms of educational outcomes (Reese, a manager);

We are striving to achieve good value for money and to reduce costs (Document 30).

Competition for the Team comes from external providers who are more commercially aware and engage professional promotion tactics. Some of these organisations, for example Outward Bound, have overcome their own survival challenges and therefore are much cuter in business:

The value of adventure delivering ... activities rather than external providers because although their delivery may be equal, my value base is different (Phoenix, adventure worker);

I think we need to be much sharper and we need to sustain ourselves as a business for the groups that we work with so that they continue to use us (Finley, a manager);

To be successful, efficient and sustainable, the Council must totally overhaul its business systems, management structures and operational processes (Document 34).

The Team, however, has historically limited itself to the absolute minimum of publicity. The annual 'Adventure Guide' produced sets out a range of prices and the menu of activities on offer. The Team relies on word of mouth, past usage and group leaders availing themselves of the Guide for its bookings.

We are driven by the educational need for extra-curricular activities (Phoenix, adventure worker);

We need to be far slicker and better at that, because it has unique selling points and I think it could be far better positioned in the face of the authority and of other business and providers, to demonstrate the benefits (Kennedy, a manager).

The Team has the skills and resources to generate income to supplement its core budget. At present, there is no exploitation of commercial opportunities.

By its own admission, the leadership has allowed the Team to drift, surviving and performing but becoming an isolated entity without scrutiny and no longer fitting within its Youth Service location. The Team was comfortable with its position and created its own operating environment. The focus for the Team became the activities, each session perceived as an isolated event and a respite for group leaders, with no liaison to tailor programmes to individual groups. Within this environment, outcomes may not have been as powerful as they might with prior planning and preparation.

#### 4.4 Outcomes of adventure

The computerised system acknowledges each group as an individual entity (Documents 12 to 15). There is therefore no way to identify how many of the bookings are 'one off' events and how many relate to longer programmes. The belief of the workforce though is that the vast majority of the bookings are 'one off' sessions, with adventure workers estimating that between 75% and 90% of the total workload comprise 'one off' sessions. Although the Team makes contact with a substantial number of participants through the year, few of these appear translated into evidenced regular users or meaningful outcomes (DfES 2002). For Authority monitoring purposes, a contact is defined as anyone using the provision once in the year. Only a small fraction of this number becomes participants (anyone using the provision more than once), achieves an accredited outcome (gains a qualification) or a recorded outcome (demonstrates some form of progress other than achieving a qualification that is a direct result of the intervention of the provision) (Documents 12 to 15). Table 5 shows the achievements of young people (data drawn from Documents 12 to 15).

	Contacts	Participants	Accredited	Recorded
2005-06	60	50	16	0
2006-07	3,550	1,085	260	202
2007-08	3,963	1,109	269	39
2008-09	5,035	1,467	201	384
2009-10	2,674	1,322	284	176

Table 5: Progressive outcomes from adventure attendance

Table 5 highlights how the number of young people entering the adventure provision as a contact far exceeds those engaging more frequently or those achieving evidenced outcomes.

Table 6 shows the young people who engaged with adventure on a more sustained basis as a percentage of those engaging for the first time (data drawn from Documents 12 to 15).

	% contacts progressing to other REYS outcomes		
	Participants	Accredited	Recorded
2005-06	83.3%	26.7%	0.0%
2006-07	30.6%	7.3%	5.7%
2007-08	28.0%	6.8%	1.0%
2008-09	29.1%	4.0%	7.6%
2009-10	49.4%	10.6%	6.6%

Table 6: Progression from being registered as a contact

Table 7 shows the numbers of young people attending the adventure provision as a percentage of the total numbers of young people engaging (data drawn from Documents 12 to 15).

	% YP attending registered through REYS			
	Contacts	Participants	Accredited	Recorded
2005-06	1.0%	0.9%	0.3%	0.0%
2006-07	40.0%	12.2%	2.9%	2.3%
2007-08	40.8%	11.4%	2.8%	0.4%
2008-09	38.4%	11.2%	1.5%	2.9%
2009-10	22.9%	11.3%	2.4%	1.5%

Table 7: Registered progression as a percentage of total attendance

Keeping a track of the numbers of participants achieving an accredited or a recorded outcome is dependent upon the adventure worker recording their achievements. The adventure workers have little flexibility within the two-hour session format for any deviation or distraction and feel they cannot deliver anything but routine:

You haven't got enough time or there may be times when what you have to say or elicit from the group they may not be interested (Devon, adventure worker);

The safety brief was minimal and in the main, the young people were not listening. Staff did not check whether the young people knew what was required or not (Participant Observation notes 7).

A more recalcitrant group or a single disruptive group member interrupts that routine and the 'flow' of the session. The focus is on 'doing the activity' rather than engaging in a process, bringing the review process to be arbitrary, dependent more upon whether the participants are following a set programme:

In a two-hour session, I wouldn't take more than maybe 10 minutes (Toby, adventure worker);

It's not practical i.e. you haven't got enough time (Devon, adventure worker);

Review's done informally at the end. A written form of evaluation would be good, but we'd need to complete it here while the young people are 'in the zone', 'cos they forget once they leave here (Dana, a group leader);

The time really was far too short for what we should be fitting in – the school staff have not done any prep work with the group (Participant Observation notes 8).

The programmes that participants follow whilst engaged with adventure seem generally to be 'stand alone' in the sense that the learning is not formalised into any subsequent review process at the young people's base site:

By reflecting on and reviewing an experience, they [young people] are better able to understand and process its meaning (Document 4);

It's done informally through young people's teachers and personal tutors. It's not documented in a 'distance travelled' exercise, but this might be a good idea (Jules, a group leader).

There is an inherent assumption that all adventure workers, by virtue of the fact that they are adventure workers, are naturally able to work reflectively and review competently without direction or

training. Although adventure workers recognise the value of review, they tend to avoid it, preferring to focus on the activity:

It's something we don't do well (Sasha, adventure worker);

You're likely to spend about five percent of your time assessing the group and five percent reviewing and evaluating (Phoenix, adventure worker);

[Adventure bases] sell accreditation packages to other organisations such as the scouts, which helps them achieve their own targets for youth engagement (Document 9).

There is a degree of frustration expressed by some workers at this (perceived) lost opportunity, but this is not universal:

The link between physical activity and mental, emotional and social health was recognised as a particular outcome (Document 7);

This is my hobby and I'm being paid for it (Toby, adventure worker);

My skills and qualifications are used not in the least (Phoenix, adventure worker).

Quality assurance is haphazard as reflexion is not within the culture of the Team and there is no process for adventure workers to reflect on their work. The Youth Service has a series of quality assurance forms but these are only completed for the Team's own youth club. There is only one team meeting a year, at which members discuss generally how the past year ran and plans for the coming year. There is no systematic evaluation to enable discussion of issues or performance:

Significant acting up arrangements ... led to delays in significant developments, concerns internally about quality and potentially safety (Document 37);

Because young people tell me, parents tell me, you can see the direct benefit of a young person who has never been sailing before and gets a certificate 5 weeks later (Devon, adventure worker);

We know by attendance and by conversations with young people and by retention rate within our own youth club (Phoenix, adventure worker);

At the end of the activities the group leaders just wanted to get away to get on with their weekend so they were not willing for any form of debrief or evaluation (Participant Observation notes 5).

This not only detracts from the Team being able to evidence their performance, but also affects the full capability of the session being realised. Each session is a unique entity and staffed as such, little account is taken to provide continuity, although the skills of particular adventure workers often accidentally allow consistency. Unless a group is following a pre-set programme towards a qualification, there is nothing to evidence the progression or achievements of any member of the group:

There's a syllabus, a start and an end, and it's quite easy to get there (Sasha, adventure worker);

Let's be honest, most people who come into adventure do so because they aren't very good with paperwork or aren't very motivated with paperwork (Phoenix, adventure worker);

Effective management of data enables us to better understand the needs of local young people. It also means that we can establish realistic performance targets and monitor our achievement of them (Document 26).

The quality assurance process has no apparent consequence for non-compliance and holds no respect from the adventure workers. The process is considered a chore and avoided.

The figures show that the Team is comprised of adventure workers who work with an enormous number of participants; every year thousands of happy and tired young people depart from sessions (Document 10, Document 11). These achievements should not be undermined; they should not be marginalised or disregarded as inconsequential. The Team staff members work hard and are rightly proud of what they do. However, the awareness of the learning is covert, left to self-realisation, rather than being overtly expressed and drawn out. As a provision founded on perceptions of risk, far more emphasis and value is placed on the safety framework.

#### 4.5 Risk and safety

Whether it is physical, psychological or emotional, risk is a critical ingredient of learning by doing (experiential education). Whilst not being able to alleviate all risk from its activities, much of what the Team delivers centres on perceived risk, an emotional reaction where the notion of risk is determined by life experience and current circumstance. The Team operates within a robust safety framework, managed by the Health and Safety Executive, the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority and the Authority itself. It holds the required adventurous activities licence for all activities offered to participants. The safety record of the Team is good, with no major accidents or an incident having been reported in the fourteen years since licensing was introduced. This is an exceptional record:

The Adventure Activities Licensing Service ... regards LA centres as beacons of best practice and a benchmark for other provision nationally (Document 37);

Left to their own devices, however rigorous the training, there will be a divergence in practice ... There is no space for complacency (Alex, Adventure Activities Licensing inspector and local authority technical adviser).

In addition, the Authority has stringent child protection guidelines, all workers undertake mandatory safeguarding training and the Team risk assesses every activity. The October 2010 report by Lord Graffham proposed that licensing be replaced by a voluntary code of conduct. Whilst discussions into this continue, the licensing regime will remain:

It's the one area within this world where we say we want everything to be safe and we're minimising risk that we actually say 'let's take a risk' and risk is a good thing, it's innate in us and it's a great learning point (Riley, a group leader).

The other side of safe delivery of adventure is to raise in participants an understanding of risk and responsibility. By emphasising safety, adventure workers can bring about learning:

If they already have an idea of risk assessment from the activity and the way that you delivered it, hopefully they can take that away with them and choose the right path then and not jump in that car, which might possibly be stolen or driving around when they shouldn't be on the roads (Dylan, adventure worker);

Young people themselves should be actively engaged in the process of risk assessment and risk management ... Risk Management is a 'life skill' in its own right (Document 1).

The philosophy of safety should be ingrained in adventure workers, both through their training as instructors and through their personal sense of professionalism. Development through the transferable learning of adventure is also supported by helping them understand wellbeing and risk assessment. It remains to be seen whether the safety concept will endure should the Licensing Authority become obsolete. Heightened perception of risk opens receptivity to learning, and the extent of learning achieved resides in the extent to which young people are progressed.

#### 4.6 The experiences of young people

The figures show that many young people attend the adventure bases every year to participate in activities (Documents 12 to 15). The Team database does not allow detailed analysis of group from schools and from other youth clubs, but it does evidence that the majority of attendees are from groups within the County. Figure 19 shows the change in attendances by the different user groups over the last five years (drawn from Documents 12 to 15).



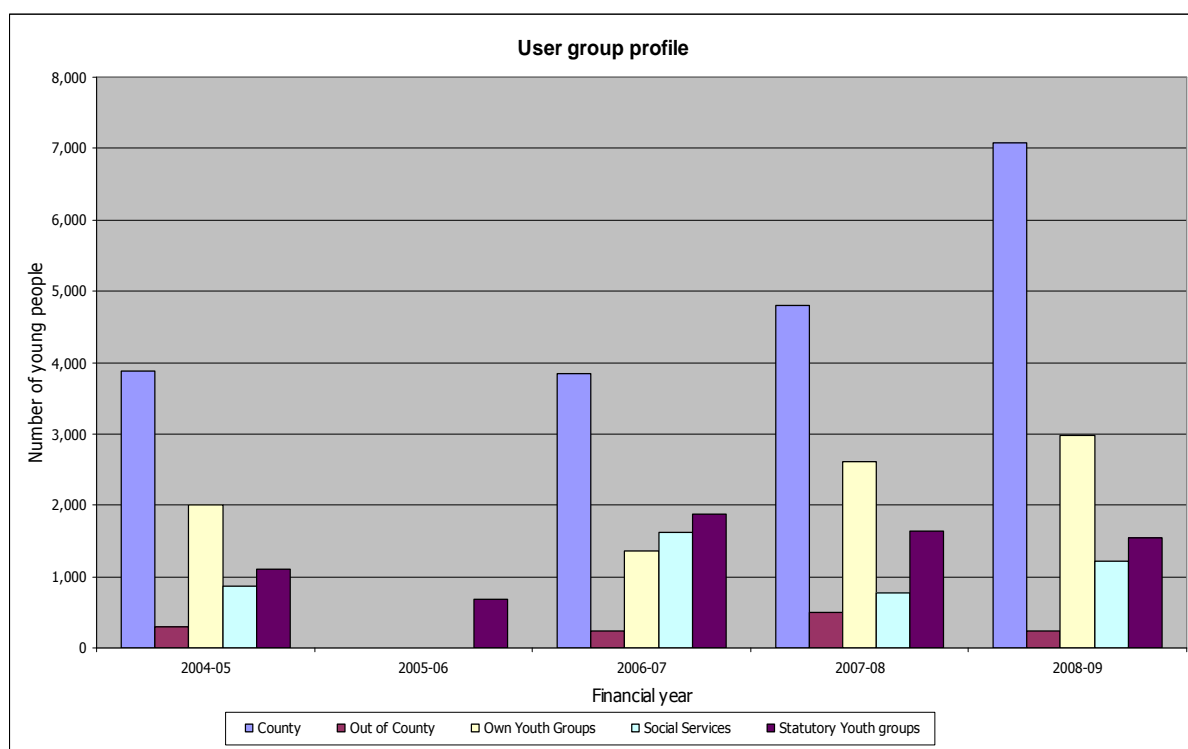


Figure 19: User group profile

The focus of the work of the Team is young people; they are the reason for the existence of the Team, focussing on the age range of 13 to 19 years, with substantially more males than females attending (Table 8 and Table 9, data drawn from Documents 12 to 15):

	<13		13 - 19		>19		Total attendance		Combined total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
2004-05	306	274	4,435	2,855	230	110	4,971	3,239	8,210
2005-06	400	382	2,728	1,046	946	250	4,074	1,678	5,752
2006-07	565	486	3,916	2,241	1,148	511	5,629	3,238	8,867
2007-08	643	640	4,019	2,328	1,338	750	6,000	3,718	9,718
2008-09	1,622	885	5,033	2,962	1,613	1,011	8,268	4,858	13,126
2009-10	979	596	4,514	2,916	1,590	1,059	7,083	4,571	11,654
							36,025	21,302	57,327

Table 8: Activity attendance by gender

	Base 1	Base 2	Base 3	Base 4	Off site	Total
2004-05	5,008	2,230	806	0	0	8,044
2005-06	1,428	2,321	990	545	0	5,284
2006-07	6,093	1,622	488	670	0	8,873
2007-08	7,715	1,380	414	52	747	10,308
2008-09	8,255	2,187	43	388	2,302	13,175
2009-10	6,785	2,152	15	75	2,616	11,643
						57,327

Table 9: Activity attendance by adventure base

Of the young people, 80% interviewed began their engagement through some form of compulsory attendance and only a small minority were inspired to attend further of their own accord:

I came for a day activity one holiday club and my parents continued bringing me (Lane, a young person);

I came with school, which was compulsory, and then I started coming on my own to the club (Jordan, a young person);

My uncle told my dad to bring me because he works here (Avery, a young person).

It is worth noting that over half the young people commented that, even if they had been motivated to continue, they could not do so due to a lack of knowledge of what was available or access to transport or finances. Therefore, signposting seems to be a major issue lacking in the Team's capacity to encourage sustained participation and progression:

I won't be able to access anything but the club (Jordan, a young person);

I wouldn't know where or how to start (Avery, a young person).

Young people had no obvious prior information of what to expect as regards activities or learning to be derived:

I came to have fun, that's all (Bailey, a young person);

We wasn't aware of anything (Cameron, a young person).

Although fun is an important part of each session, it should provide inspiration to learn. The lack of prior explanation of what to expect caused some degree of consternation amongst young people, as the deficiency of information encouraged rumour and fear to generate in their minds:

[Fear of] falling, having more colds etc in winter time (Emery, a young person);

What if I didn't like the activity or that I might have to work with someone or people I didn't know or like (Evan, a young person).

Young people generally considered their engagement to be fun, recreational and a welcome change from the classroom. Very rarely, however, were they able to demonstrate knowledge of learning or progression away from skills development:

We wasn't aware why we had to come, it's P.E.  
(Cameron, a young person);

Just knew I liked it (Jordan, a young person);

I came because I don't like regular sports (Bailey, a young person).

No young person knowingly underwent a review of their learning, although most could identify some progress made for themselves:

Getting on with others, communicating, perseverance  
(Mason, a young person);

I've got more confidence and I trust people now (Kyle, a young person).

However, beyond simply engaging with a possibly new activity, being with people they like, being away from their usual environment and having fun, the young people could not vocalise or demonstrate learning, unless it was related to accreditation:

It varies for the individual what they get out of it and the support they are given to reflect on their learning (researcher's own observation notes C);

I had a logbook to record skills I learnt (Avery, a young person);

How to sail, how to talk to new people, how to teach others, got some qualifications from the courses I've done (Jordan, a young person).

To refer back to David Crossland's (2008) food analogy, when asked, all but one of the young people considered their engagement to be a 'fast food' experience (briefly thrilling but short-lived and ultimately of little satisfaction):

The type of activity is not as important as key characteristics of its delivery (Document 9);

Engaging young people evenings, weekends, holidays, daytimes even, has become the highest priority of Government because it sees that as the panacea to

solve youth crime, to solve youth education (Rowan, a manager);

Positive activities are about ensuring that young people have fun and interesting clubs and activities to participate in (Harper, a manager).

As a Team, the adventure workers are aware that the offer to young people has to be more than a cynical exercise in 'being seen to be doing':

A fundamental characteristic of our youth offer is having opportunities for young people to influence provision (Document 36);

If you want a true sense of young people making those choices, they have to be educated about the choices before they make the choices (Phoenix, adventure worker).

Engaging young people in positive activities is nothing new, and one could argue that this has been the reason for being of the Team for the whole of its existence:

We support the offer by offering positive and enjoyable learning experiences (Document 37);

Where for the past 26 years we've been providing positive activities but having to hide it all under subversive learning, giving it value by naming it education or physical education, now we're saying just as an activity in itself it has value and a worth (Sam, a manager);

People sometimes say 'no' when they really mean 'talk to me, encourage me' ... There is no rulebook; it's about progression, learning and above all instructor intuition (Alex, Adventure Activities Licensing inspector and local authority technical adviser).

The activities enable participants to undertake a voyage of personal discovery, to learn about themselves, learn what they can achieve and how they can work with others:

Being active outdoors, through informal recreation and leisure, volunteering, and learning in the outdoors, can play an important role in improving people's physical and mental health (Document 6);

It inspires them to achieve, enables them to believe that they are capable of trying new things and raises their aspirations (Kennedy, a manager);

Skills in change management and risk management are particularly important because whilst introducing the new, we must continue to ensure children and young people are safe and achieve the best possible outcomes (Document 3);

We engage children and young people and we enrich them (Alex, Adventure Activities Licensing inspector and local authority technical adviser).

That voyage could be much more powerful if the participants are supported in a review and realise their learning and progression. The researcher believes that the traditional education system (school) trains people never to admit not knowing the answer for fear of being perceived as failing, a view supported by Longworth (2004). However, within the Team, participants are encouraged to try, fail and admit when they cannot succeed alone or at the first attempt. The subsequent review techniques are then purportedly applied to extrapolate the activity process and the actions, reactions and interactions of the group members into more relevant and 'normal' situations to which the participants can relate:

We often use the term *transfer of learning* ... It refers to the process by which we help young people to understand what they have learnt and gained (Document 4);

Team building is a key part of outdoor activities often with one person supporting the other, or a group supporting each other for safety (Rowan, a manager).

The foundation stone is that the participants hold in their heads the theoretical concepts from the classroom and then have these reinforced by the Team in a fun, 'natural', visual way. The Team enables consequences (positive and negative) to be a natural outcome whilst participants are empowered to work through what they believe to be true. For example the 'crevasse cross' exercise supports science, learning about balance and pivots. Without compromising safety, the participants have to be allowed to fail in

order to learn and understand choices and consequences for themselves. As it moves towards integration with the Education Service Adventure Team, this Team has the opportunity to reflect and develop itself into a powerful learning force that will support the cognitive and social development of young people.

#### 4.7 The future

The Team has a new future: “while it’s uncertain, it’s also quite exciting” (Devon, adventure worker). Resistance to change is a natural reaction, making adventure workers want to cling to what they know, although the Team has the support of the Senior Management Team:

[The future] really is a difficult one because it’s in the lap of the politicians (Sasha, adventure worker);

The future for me is about consolidation, it’s about finding a home within the new drivers (Sam, a manager);

I’d like to see us placed differently – we have a remit to work with young people, not young people within the Youth Service or just schools ... when we’re in the Youth Service we don’t get credit for working with young people in schools. If they come to you in the afternoon and again in the evening, they are the same young people (Phoenix, adventure worker);

All agreed that the social cost in closing or losing facilities would be high (Document 9);

Change brings with it the exciting prospect of new opportunities (Document 30);

If the Council is to avoid extensive cuts in services, it must take a fundamentally different approach in the future (Document 34).

Although clearly originating from recreational rather than educational motives, the educative potential of the work of the Team is clearly recognised and appreciated throughout the Authority. The past distanced leadership approach has been recognised and action is underway for redress. The potential for the future is in its new location of existing in a wider Team specifically devised for the

purposes of supporting learning outcomes. The recent Authority reviews have brought fresh recognition and appreciation of adventure, with both leadership and elected members reasserting their commitment to maintain the provision.

#### 4.8 Conclusion

The Team had become an isolated and insular unit within the Authority, comfortable in its established way of operating. Without scrutiny, the Team had not had cause to reflect or change in any other way but that of its own devising. A certain degree of complacency had appeared within the Team and its work, dictating how and what it delivered rather than ensuring it best met the needs of participants and maximising outcomes for each group. Its singular format did not enable participants attending to achieve as much as they might, with use not being made of the full capacity of experiential learning. By inadequately introducing and reviewing each activity session, the participants cannot achieve the most learning from their engagement.

To have survived for over 30 years is a major accomplishment and having progressed from being the vague recreational notion of one manager to the modern, sophisticated facilities and equipment it now possesses demonstrates the commitment of the Authority for the provision to continue. The challenge before the Team in the present is to capitalise on this, reflecting on its recent past and progressing forward, embedding itself in the Authority consciousness as a part of the new combined Team. By projecting itself forward and promoting its popularity and achievements as an invaluable learning tool, the Team has the potential for longevity.

## Chapter 5: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

### 5.1 Introduction

This research focussed on one local authority Adventure Team, with a view to exploring whether the Team was delivering the 'learning' demanded by its youth work roots and whether that learning could be enhanced to offer an improved corporate identity and a sustainable future. There was a further aim of looking to explore implications for national policy and practice. This chapter explores these issues in more detail.

Adventure was defined through the literature review as activity-based, outdoor experiences existing alongside environmental education to form the overarching field of outdoor learning (Gilbertson, Bates, McLoughlin & Ewert 2006:5). The findings show that the Team works with many young people and delivers a high number of outcomes; despite the same programmes and activities being used to achieve both product (formal) and process (informal) outcomes, no attempt is made to achieve both simultaneously. It is the conclusion and contention of this research that holistic learning is a desirable pursuit; holistic in this study meaning using theory (classroom) as well as physical and visual processes to achieve learning and combining this with the creation of social, self-aware beings:

A vehicle for understanding human nature and a variety of subjects closely connected with traditional education (Prouty, Panicucci and Collinson 2007:22).

The findings also revealed that the activities of the Team are predominantly perceived as 'stand alone' and 'one off', without clear connection being made to other areas of a young person's life and without co-ordination with group leaders. It became clear through the literature and the study that positive outcomes are best achieved if the programme is delivered through a structured framework (Beames, Higgins & Nicol 2012:19), deliberately pre-planning the



experience, incorporating reviewing and reinforcement (Prouty, Panicucci & Collinson 2007:44). The research showed that the Team has struggled to identify its location and establish its corporate identity as it suffered from a lack of clear organisational leadership and excessive distributed leadership (Harris & Spillane 2008:31).

The remainder of this chapter will first provide a brief response to the research questions before largely following the track of the literature review (Chapter 2) to consider the findings before seeking a way forward and the implications for policy and practice.

## 5.2 The research questions

From the outset, this study was built around two research questions:

1. Whether the Team was delivering the 'learning' mandated by its youth work roots?
2. Whether there was an extension to the learning delivery of adventure that would provide the Team with an improved corporate identity and the foundations of longevity?

A third, supplementary question existed in the background of how the research findings could be applied more generally to the field of learning and the implications that would have for policy and practice within the field of learning, specifically adventure learning.

Following the data gathering and analysis, the questions may be answered. The response to the first question is a cautious semi-affirmative, as the Team is definitely delivering a form of learning, but not that which would be mandated by its youth work roots. Its activities are unavoidably going to bring skill development to young people, which is a form of learning and some of the programmes are longer term, which will bring a more ingrained level of learning ("the experience phase", Priest & Gass 2005:173). Ascribing to the concept of situated learning (Lave & Wenger 1991), young people will unavoidably learn through their involvement in the activities.

However, the learning is restricted in that the programmes delivered by the Team are not specifically geared towards transferable or extended learning, as may be expected from its youth work roots, which would focus on personal development and social education (Young 1999:78). There is no deliberate lateral progression from the skill development of activity engagement into life skills, any such progression is an extension of the situated learning of the individual.

The response to the second research question is a definite affirmative as there is potential for extending the learning capacity of the adventure programmes delivered by the Team. Without “working out what the curriculum will be” (Jeffs & Smith 1999:67), there is a limitation to the capacity of the adventure workers to maximise learning. Activities are booked by group leaders who have a particular objective around their own programme, a focus of informal learning or formal learning. Building greater relationships with group leaders would develop synergy and a shared vision, embedding the Team in the organisation (“set the tone and establish a standard”, Senge 1990:236). The supplementary consideration of the implications for policy and practice follow, as the findings are considered in detail.

### 5.3 Adventure as a learning provision

The literature showed how adventure should open a doorway to lifelong learning. The findings showed that participants enjoyed their engagement with adventure but did not find their engagement inspirational and mostly it did not lead them on to further engagement or a more enduring experience (Bailey, a young person). This arose partially through not being aware of the opportunities for continuation but also in facilities not existing for further access. It may be that they did not succeed in the activity itself or fulfilling all tasks set, but participants should feel that they have managed to achieve something they never thought they would, they should feel they want to go on and try more, engage more, achieve more

(Gilbertson, Bates, McLaughlin & Ewert 2006). Not every session will be earth shattering, but every session should leave a young person feeling positive; to have simply had fun, which the findings showed was largely the case, is insufficient in a sphere of learning (Gass 1985). Learning is grounded in the present of the individual (situated learning, Lave & Wenger 1991) but to make the learning fully meaningful, there has to be a process of supported realisation of transferability of the learning (for example, Avery, a young person expressing that the experience did not fit with any other area of life). This reinforces Dewey's (1938) view of new, progressive education being one that designs experiences based on an intimate understanding of people's past to determine their present experiences (the principle of experiential continuity). According to Dewey's theory (1938), the continuity of a person's stored individual experiences interacts with the dynamics of the present experience, to create an individual's current experience of 'reality'. The research confirms Dewey's (1910, 1938) argument that the educator should manage present experiential quality by taking account of the past: to engage young people, to get them to think about things in a different way (Rowan, a manager):

Exercise their adrenaline glands, over and above what they might do otherwise on the streets through other risk taking behaviour (Sam, a manager).

This notion can be expanded to include managing experiential quality in relation to other aspects of the learner's life; that is, working with group leaders and teachers to relate adventure learning to wider developmental programmes or the classroom curriculum. The findings highlighted how maximising interest and motivation resides in the presentation of the session (observation notes 1); Hahn (Priest & Gass 2005) would extend this to say the session must stretch the person beyond their limited self-conceptions and towards maximising their potential. Within the two-hour session, the adventure workers voiced a disinclination to do much more than focus the participants

on the activity. The research showed the adventure workers know how they should structure programmes (Priest & Gass 2005) but felt more comfortable treating every session as a 'one off'. However, to learn participants must learn to place themselves appropriately on a "Plan-Do-Review" cycle and use it to define actions, reactions and future behaviour (Kolb 1984). Learning is applied tangentially to other areas of life through reviewing and evaluating (Priest & Gass 2005). The process is:

About making and developing a sense of meaning with young people (Batsleer 2008:7).

The adventure workers knew the stages of a session (Priest & Gass 2005), but claim lack of time within a session as the reason for not following this pattern or the repetitive nature of bookings leading to boredom (for example Toby, an adventure worker expressing the need to be inventive as delivery has become routine):

Your ability to build a relationship and to work your way into that young person's confidence is almost negligible (Phoenix, an adventure worker).

Improving partnerships with group leaders and better time structures would enable targeted planning; adventure workers could develop programmes directed more towards specific group needs, bringing a less repetitive cycle of delivery, otherwise "there's no real opportunity for ingrained learning or really targeting what you're doing" (Alex, Adventure Activities Licensing inspector and local authority technical adviser).

The research highlighted that adventure is more than delivery of activities, but is a holistic provision that offers opportunities not only for skill acquisition, competence progression and affective development but also fosters an awareness of nature and a sense of ownership of the environment (Gilbertson, Bates, McLaughlin & Ewert 2006; Devon, an adventure worker); it starts where the participants are located: emotionally, physically and psychologically (Young 2006). The activity is not everything but is a means to an end

(Kennedy, a manager); it does not matter whether the activity is conducted as intended or whether the young person is fully successful, for example in reaching the top of the climbing wall or Jacob's Ladder (Toby, an adventure worker, Prouty, Panicucci & Collinson 2007). Through the literature, it was shown how learning is along a spectrum of ownership ("banking" to "libertarian" Freire 1996), as individuals develop the capacity to apply experience. It was also mooted that learning is a complex construct of Piaget's cognitive development (Woods 2009) combined with Vygotsky's social interaction (Gilbertson, bates, McLoughlin & Ewert 2006). Experiential learning is the core of adventure learning: individuals interact, learning to communicate and negotiate with one another, but they also learn about their own capabilities, developing confidence and being empowered to take ownership, moving pedagogy to andragogy (Knowles 1990) and moving the adventure worker from instructor to facilitator (a "shift in the frame of reference" Kolb 1984:146):

The group takes on a life of its own, and the group dynamic processes that result have an impact far beyond what the collection of individuals working alone could accomplish (Toseland, Jones & Gellis 2004).

From the research findings, it is proposed that 'off the shelf' guides should be developed, demonstrating how each activity should work and the learning that can be drawn from it (Gilbertson, Bates, McLaughlin & Ewert 2006:86). This will support the adventure workers in evidencing their work and enhance their awareness of potential outcomes. The repeated outcome throughout the literature and the research is the potential of adventure to address the needs and issues of users (Finley, a manager). Outdoor learning has the capacity and the potential to bring young people together, challenge them and enable them to learn about themselves, their environment, their communities and people within their world (Harper, a manager, advocating addressing social issues). The models of Honey &

Mumford (1982) and Kolb (1984) can be used to demonstrate how participants bring their *lived* experience to an adventure experience and engage in the 'plan, do, review' cycle to reframe and progress. Building the adventure experience as the 'adventure wave' (Priest & Gass 2005), participants may be supported to reflect and realise how they can relocate their learning to other environments. These models combine with Gardner's (1984) multiple intelligences theory to demonstrate how individuals all learn in different ways and at different times, thus all participants found different extents of learning from their engagement, emphasizing the capacity of the Team to provide visual and physical reinforcement to theoretical learning. The structure of the learning experience is derived through the construct of 'The Adventure Team' and its component elements.

#### 5.4 The Adventure Team

##### *5.4.1 History of the Team*

The basic concept of REYS (DfES 2002) was to mandate that successful services could only be provided through structured frameworks, a notion proved by the findings here. The idea of a curriculum was resisted for many years within the Team, as in youth services (Smith 2003), but a curriculum is simply a programme derived from a syllabus, which in itself simply lists topics within a subject area. The imposition of a curriculum to an adventure programme is emphasised by this research as a necessity to move adventure from recreational activity to learning experience ("a start and an end" Sasha, an adventure worker). The creation of a single combined Team has the potential of developing a stronger provision that can deliberately dovetail programmes into the National Curriculum whilst providing personal and social learning. The combined Team will develop a culture of its own, but in addition, the creation of a stronger team identity and clearer position within the Authority will naturally strengthen the bond between the Team and the organisation, influencing culture and Authority identity. Left

without strong leadership, the Team has created a comfortable “community of practice” (Lave 1998):

A community of mutual engagement, a negotiated enterprise, and a repertoire of negotiable resources accumulated over time (Lave 1998:126).

Within this community, “legitimate peripheral participation” (Lave & Wenger 1991:29) has developed where new adventure workers sit on the fringe until proving their knowledge and conformity to the established culture, thereby becoming accepted to the core of the Team. Under the Youth Service, the Adventure Team found a core philosophy in the youth work ethic, which evolved as the Team pulled away. Under the combined Team, the philosophy and culture will be crafted jointly, providing the inclusion that will attain the engagement and support of the workers (the foundation of team working). This research highlighted the tension between the core Youth Service and the Adventure Team, demonstrating there must be commonality of values and understanding for a team to work effectively together. As was demonstrated through this research, the Authority adventure provision has unique access to a defined target group and a departmental ethos. This is a strength and must be seen as such. Sitting as it does within a local authority structure, the Team proved that it is ideally placed to meet the demands of both a product and a process curriculum (Priest & Gass 2005). The adventure provision of the case study sits on the cusp of both aspects of learning, able to serve the demands of the National Curriculum and of individual personal and social needs. This adaptability provides a platform to engage all learners (Honey & Mumford 1982) and all types of intelligence (Gardner 1984).

To function effectively, this Team needs to become a more cohesive unit, with both leadership and adventure worker building common objectives and understanding (Senge 1990). A key part of doing this would be to develop clear strategic and operational aims and

objectives, jointly negotiated (Adair 1996, Allen 2009) with the leadership.

#### *5.4.2 Leadership and management*

Allowing the Team to drift as it has, the Authority management has allowed apathy to pervade, which has eroded motivation and performance in that the adventure workers lack incentive to work at their peak (Thomas 2000). Having a single review meeting a year, as happens in the case study Team, and no regular team meetings, is insufficient to develop coherence, unity and peer support. Individual frustrations fester and build over time, leading to unnecessary stress that could be alleviated or even prevented by forging open communication (Ford, Hunter, Merton & Waller 2005). Similarly, the adventure workers see no consequence from the Authority to their performance, neither celebrations nor penalties. This reinforces the isolation of the Team and its drift from the core Youth Service. The overall leader of the combined Team is of the Education Service adventure provision, so it is likely that over the coming months a more structured framework will be developed to encompass the Team, thus reinvigorating and realigning performance. The literature showed that for any team to perform coherently it must exist within an organisation framework with strategic planning existing as a core reference to direct the Team (Belbin 1993, Bush & Middlewood 2010, Fullan 2005). The research proved that this was not the case in this Team; it highlighted how easily a team can drift away without management control and a unified vision. The research findings disagree with Hank Williams' assertion that "teams need leaders, groups need managers" (1996:15), the opposite was proved to be the case here. A team is a coherent, coordinated collective, with a sophisticated communication structure; each member working in synchronicity with the others towards commonly accepted and understood goals. Every element of the unit understands its function and is highly dependent upon the others. Such an arrangement is



manageable almost by rote, through a set of clear and definable rules. The management role is therefore extremely mechanical and predictable, with foreseeable consequences if one element fails to perform. A group, on the other hand, is fluid, variable and disparate, such as this Team appears to be. A collection of individuals with a common interest and performing the same basic function, as the Team, cannot be managed through such an unthinking, formalised structure but needs a leader, someone the members can believe in, trust and respect; a leader must have credibility and lead with humility (West-Burnham 2011). The findings of this research emphasised this point through the lack of an obvious leader, the Team operated more as a collective, without visible lines of accountability and with operations drifting, dependent upon people performing because they knew what to do but not necessarily because of any particular guidance or plan.

A leader with knowledge and experience of adventure, thus accepted by the Team, but also who has knowledge and experience of leadership, thus is accepted by the Authority hierarchy, provides a competent bridge to create the understanding of the provision that was previously lacking. That capability relies in part on the acceptance by the workers that they too are leaders and not just followers

#### *5.4.3 The adventure workers*

The research highlighted the disparate nature of the Team members without a common understanding (Senge 1990, Gilbert 2005). In essence, the Team needs to undergo that which it aspires to achieve in participants (Young 2005). Each adventure worker exists as a single entity, not aware of the motivations or intentions of others; there appear to be no common objectives (Belbin 1981, Senge 1990). This may progress, as the elements of the combined Team come together and are finding a common way forward. For the two adventure provisions to come together at the start of April was

convenient to the Authority, as this is the start of the financial year. For the two provisions, however, it was not ideal, April falls just as the peak demand months are starting. The process of alignment and formulating joint plans has not really had a chance to take place; the decision was taken to allow the 'season' to run its course and then full joint working to be established over the quieter winter months.

The low level of adventure provision that the adventure workers feel they are currently delivering leads to frustrations that the Team Manager tends to micromanage the Team and hold down innovation and progressive programming (Drucker 1999, Ford, Hunter, Merton & Waller 2005). This tendency may arise because of their social work background, or it may be a personal trait, but it leaves little capacity for pioneering working or for adventure workers to develop projects through which they can develop themselves, their skills or even the Team. This "vanguard model" approach (Williams 1996:40) also gives rise to an inclination on the part of the adventure worker to absolve their responsibility for success, leading ultimately to an encroachment of worker insecurity, self-doubt and undermined confidence. This goes against the concept of modern public sector organisations, where the current drive is towards leaner structures. Organisations in the current economic climate can no longer afford to be "over-managed and under-led" (Ford, Hunter, Merton and Waller 2005:85). The Authority has historically recruited staff from within but lacked the provision of progressive training, leaving staff to gain additional skills independently, which has undermined morale, damaged the Team's capacity to progress through team learning (Senge 1990) and created a "societal culture" (Bush & Middlewood 2010). Within this Team, the Team Manager struggles to delegate and does not demonstrate authority, but is the first to personally fill a staff shortage, do a 'difficult' job (like drive the mobile climbing wall) or to do 'other' jobs (like take boat engines to be serviced or set up camps).

From the research, it was clear that the adventure workers enjoy their work and believe they have the interests of the participants at the core of their work, although some have lost the real passion and drive that they may have once had. Passion and drive is an essential element in motivating people, stimulating them to achieve (Goleman 1995, Adair 1996), as apathy and boredom flavour the atmosphere of a session as much as enthusiasm and interest. The research found that to maximise effectiveness, adventure workers must be able to work reflectively. They need time to process the session for themselves and analyse what worked and what should be revised (Kolb 1984, Moon 2004). The unanimous opinion of the case study Team was that this opportunity did not exist within their allocated session time. Any 'spare' time is eroded by clearing away equipment and changing clothes. Anecdotally, all the adventure workers recounted that during the busy summer months they can be delivering three sessions a day to three different groups. This is exhausting and prevents meaningful reflexion to occur, as well as creating the basis for boredom. Whatever the curriculum aims, the principles of informal learning should be understood by the workers and a thorough knowledge acquired of review techniques to draw out the learning. This was not always evident in the workers participating, although all the workers demonstrated that they were aware of the basic concept of the "adventure wave" (Priest & Gass 2005). The input of the participants reinforced the notion that learning through adventure is most successful when supported by empathic working (Haskell, Linds and Ippolito 2002) with shared experiences in delivery. The potential of outdoor learning, evidenced through the research in the observations of the interactions of the participants with the staff, is to put life and learning into a context that makes sense and clears the mind. Adventure is learning presented in a different way, distanced from the classroom and based on practical application. This evidences that perhaps only when one

has lived a similar experience, will such empathy become comprehensible and achievable (Loynes 2004). Passion becomes infectious and workers can relate to the emotional impact experienced by the participants (Haskell, Linds & Ippolito 2002) and use that emotion to reinforce the teaching (Haskell 2004) and support the learning (Prouty, Panicucci and Collinson 2007). As the research showed, the most powerful learning arises from multi-agency, multi-professional communication and working.

#### *5.4.4 Partnerships*

The research highlighted how meaningful adventure that delivers effective transferable learning should not appear to participants as cocooned experiences. Adventure should be holistic, with clear links to other areas of participants' lives. This area of partnership working was lacking in the Team, despite many of the signposting agencies being within the same Authority. The research highlighted the value of partnership working, if only by it being proved to be largely lacking. Adventure, as the workers of the case study emphasised, works best when the group leaders and the workers share information and work together (Jess, an adventure worker). That way, work can take place within a structure (DfES 2002); the workers can start from a point of knowing something of the nature and character of the participants and the group leader can continue progressional and instructional work with the young people back at the home base (Devon, an adventure worker):

The relationship is everything because personal growth, development, learning about values are human tasks that can only be done within a relationship (Young 2006:61).

That relationship exists predominantly with the group leader, who will know the participants best (Dylan, an adventure worker) and the group leaders can have a powerful impact on the way the group engages with the activity and the learning they derive from it (observation notes 5). Through this also, the session becomes

meaningful for the young person and they engage more and derive more from it. The research, however, demonstrated that much is assumed, with time restrictions being quoted as the reason adventure workers assume prior preparation of the group members by the group leaders (Phoenix, an adventure worker) and the group leaders assuming that they need have no involvement with the activity session (Dana, a group leader). Equally, there is as much assumed as to the review of sessions at the home base once the group leaves, which the research findings showed to be just as unfounded (Jules, a group leader). To be an effective learning tool, there has to be effective partnership working between the adventure workers and the group leaders, especially so that the adventure workers have prior knowledge of the group members and can plan accordingly. The Team is facing demand from the Authority for more evidence of outcomes, because of closer management scrutiny, and the research has highlighted the inaccuracy of these assumptions concerning prior preparation and post-session review. In addition, budgetary pressures on the Authority have cascaded to the Team and are rousing investigations into ways that the Team can develop partnerships to design and deliver more bespoke programmes, for example with academy schools. The future, however, for any public sector organisation is not entirely within its own hands, it is externally driven by prevailing Government philosophy.

#### *5.4.5 External factors*

This Authority embraced 'Resourcing Excellent Youth Services' (REYS) (DfES 2002) and 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children' framework (DfES 2003), restructuring and supporting a vision of "making the UK the best place for children and young people to grow up" (DCSF 2007a). Subsequent initiatives reinforced the ambition to centralise participants in the services and provisions designed for them (such as the 'Positive Activities' (DfES 2009) agenda, the 'Learning Outside The Classroom Manifesto' (DfES 2006), 'Aiming

High for Young People: A Ten-Year Strategy for Positive Activities' (DCSF 2007) and guidance on overcoming perceived barriers to engagement (DCSF 2009).

The Authority found their structure and philosophy challenged in May 2010 when a general election introduced a Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition Government. Adventure appeared in the 2005 Conservative Manifesto (Barwell 2005) and the 2005 Liberal Democrat Manifesto (Greenaway 2010) but in neither 2010 Manifesto, nor does it appear in the Coalition Agreement (Cabinet Office 2010), but the Prime Minister expressed support for outdoor learning in his National Citizen Service (BBC 2010). Despite its failure to provide definitive guidance, Government has indicated an intention to continue to serve the needs of young people: "Youth work is essential to meet the coalition government's aspirations" (Hillier 2010). The literature demonstrated the capacity of adventure to be used in a range of ways to support learning and the research findings showed that adventure is popular amongst young people and that many young people are achieving a range of outcomes from adventure engagement. The progression is to build on this. There is an assertion that the Government "absolutely believe that outdoor learning is vital" (Teather 2010). It was simultaneously advocated, however, that outdoor learning is perceived as wider than adventure activity, more in the context of the 'Learning Outside the Classroom' manifesto (DfES 2006): "Getting out of the classroom is what is so vital" (Teather 2010). Despite the commitment, Government has committed to reducing bureaucracy, advocated support for the report of Lord Young of Graffham to abolish the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA) and undertaken to make the Learning Outside the Classroom Council a self-financing entity. Holistic learning was endorsed by the previous Government in both the 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children' (DfES 2005) and the 'Learning Outside the Classroom' manifesto (DfES 2006) and is identified

through the research findings of this study as being a positive and desirable route for participants. The potential of adventure in offering holistic learning is unparalleled; adventure can achieve outcomes mandated by the National Curriculum, and informal development necessary for coherent communities. The lack of any evident replacement legislation and the concurrent swingeing cuts imposed by Government have left the Authority to determine its route for itself:

Just continue to deliver high quality, educationally based activities rather than just jumping through the activities because they're fun and there's no harm in having fun but you can also bolt on a bit of education or a bit of personal and social development (Dylan, an adventure worker).

There is a sense amongst the adventure workers that they are powerless to steer change: "I haven't had any politician or senior manager or Councillor ask me the practicalities" (Devon, an adventure worker). The sense is that any cost of efficiency savings will be imposed, not negotiated. The creation of a single combined Team is an invaluable opportunity to ensure the development of a comprehensive provision that will facilitate positive and meaningful outcomes for participants, ensuring sustained funding into the future.

#### *5.4.6 The financial perspective*

The look of the Team is fresh and impressive, but feelings concerning the buildings range from pride (Sam, a manager) to scepticism (Rowan, a manager). Having the most attractive buildings and the most modern equipment is a redundant manoeuvre if the adventure workers are not able to produce the best outcomes possible and maximise the potential of the participants attending (DfES 2002, Ford, Hunter, Merton & Waller 2005). Expensive surroundings demand high preservation (Kennedy, a manager), which has added to the income generation needed to maintain the provision and an expectation that all activities will be on site, stifling progression:

This fantastic adventure base that we've got is also the biggest Achilles Heel because people see us here and think that we don't need to go to the Peak District, (Phoenix, an adventure worker).

Anecdotally, the adventure workers speak nostalgically of the 'old days' in old huts as being fun, believing the new environment, although very modern and smart, has brought a less friendly and more formal atmosphere. Having smart facilities is an attractive feature that makes a positive first impression and it may be an important emotive factor in encouraging group leaders of more affluent groups to make bookings. It does not, however, ensure a high quality of provision.

It has never been disputed by the researcher, the adventure workers or the managers that the provision of adventure is costly (for example, interview with Kennedy, a manager). The Team, however, has been fortunate in being able to generate income to supplement the core budget. This position is not envisaged to change under its new arrangement; it may be that in the future the Authority allows the Team to seek opportunities to expand its income generation capacity, which in turn would allow for Team expansion and therefore greater capacity and programmes for young people. Sessions for Youth Service groups have always been subsidised by the core Youth Service budget allocation, with costs higher for other County groups and yet higher for out of County groups. The existing cost structure has been retained for the current season, as the combined Team only came into being at the start of April 2011 and it was considered too late to change rates. Equally, both of the two adventure provisions retained their existing budget allocation, which was agreed during the previous year. The decisions have not yet been made as to the precise budget allocation for the combined Team or the level of income generation required for the coming financial year. The Team, in its new form, will continue to deliver towards the objectives of other groups, achieving both formal and informal outcomes.



### 5.5 Outcomes of adventure

The ultimate ambition of the Team is “the integration of learning from the adventure program into the participant’s real life” (Priest & Gass 2005:184). The research finding was that to make the adventure experience meaningful and to have a more enduring impact, it should be delivered within a clear theoretical framework, understood by all workers and clearly and visibly underpinning all activities. The Team studied lacked awareness of underpinning philosophy (Toby, an adventure worker, for example, could not name a single theorist or theory relating to adventure or informal learning). The work of informal educators should be evident through all programmes as the foundation stone of the learning (Dewey 1910, Rogers 1952, Egan 2002, Freire 1996). Without this, the research showed that the experience becomes nothing more significant than fun and recreation. Without a proper understanding of underlying theory, workers can neither clarify nor justify the experiences or the progression of the participants, which was predominantly the case here. Equally, the research showed that without a robust quality assurance system, the Team cannot evidence its achievements, which ultimately can serve against it. As the study highlighted, a lack of self-promotion and organisational awareness of the Team can lead to mythical (mis)understandings of the work (for example Rowan, a manager asserting the misconception of adventure as requiring specialist management).

The research findings were to emphasise the capacity of adventure to achieve the dual outcomes of formal and informal learning. Developing closer partnerships will enable the Team to develop programmes specifically targeted towards the goals of those organisations, many of which will be formal learning outcomes in the shape of accreditations. At the same time, the findings highlighted how informal outcomes in the shape of personal development and social education cannot be ignored and, even if not the primary goal,

are achieved as a by-product of engagement with adventure for participants. Whatever the desired outcome, an overarching goal remains always safe delivery, with risk remaining perceived rather than real.

### 5.6 Risk and safety

The literature presented the notion of adventure being founded upon risk: real physical risk, perceived risk and psychological risk. Real risk in the Authority adventure setting is virtually non-existent, although it cannot be totally avoided; the concept and delivery of adventure is based upon perceived risk and psychological risk. There are stringent organisational protocols that must be followed in employing adventure workers, for example the completion of Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks. Adventure workers also must evidence the attainment of National Governing Body (NGB) Awards at instructor level. For the delivery of adventure, there are also organisational safety requirements to maintain comprehensive risk assessments, which are designed methodically to process all possible aspects of the activity, identifying every conceivable risk and how it may be managed. There are always going to be unavoidable incidents, for example, participants disobeying safety instructions, but the Authority and the Team operate a framework of safety that has, to date, proved successful.

The additional framework of the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA) has provided oversight of the prudent safety mechanisms and adequate controls of the Team. The proposal to replace the licensing regime with a voluntary code of conduct (Young 2010) is currently under consultation and discussion but would release the Team from funding and renewing an annual licence and undergoing an annual inspection.

Perceived risk arises from the perception of the individual: "death or serious injury" (Rory, a young person); their understanding of the

activity and the physical risk that it poses: “people getting hurt or dying” (Emery, a young person). That understanding focuses the mind, “that starts the learning process, albeit a subversive learning process” (Sam, a manager) and brings the young person to concentrate, enabling them to learn more:

That more intense experience, that environment where they trust me, where they are challenged, where they are exposed to their experiences then you open them up far faster (Phoenix, an adventure worker).

The desire of moving young people out of their comfort zone and into their stretch zone was the basis of Hahn’s philosophy; his belief in ‘pushing’ the individual physically and mentally can sound harsh:

But when you’ve got to get into that tent and you’re all wet and cold, when you can hear every raindrop on what’s now your ceiling, when your stove won’t light, when your hands hurt belying your mate, when you think you’ve lost the rest of the group in a cave – that’s when you learn (Sam, a manager).

It could seem cruel in modern society intentionally to design an experience that may be beyond the confidence and capabilities of the participant, but the research findings showed how this moved participants from comfort into their stretch zone (Priest & Gass 2005). The research demonstrated that deeply embedded within adventure is the notion of psychological risk. To experience risk is to be prepared to lose, to miss, to fail, to fall. To risk is to stumble forward towards an unknown and possibly unseen goal, relying perhaps on others, of overcoming fears and doubts, of experiencing adrenaline flowing as one dares oneself further. Not to risk is safe: safe education that offers no challenge, education that does not reach beyond known boundaries, education that offers little learning, the “dumbed down” adventure experiences referred to by Phoenix, an adventure worker.

### 5.7 The experience of young people

The research showed the contextualisation of adventure to the

environment of the participant (observation notes 2). What one names 'adventure' is relative to one's own world, the environment within which one lives, and is measured within those terms. As was stressed in the interviews with the adventure workers, there is too much 'safe' activity that is called adventure: a walk in the woods, a kayak session, an overnight camp. To work within the known boundaries of the individual is to give the impression that the young person has the option to choose to participate (or not), engage (or not), eat (or not), sleep (or not). The research showed there is a thin border between impulsion, compulsion and non-participation. In the research, participants arriving at the adventure bases had to justify a decision not to participate in an activity: "challenge by choice" (Phoenix, an adventure worker) and had to engage in some way, even if that was simply being alongside to support others of the group or being allocated another role, such as timekeeper. There are some limits however: participants cannot arrive and conduct themselves without guidance or regulation. An important consideration is that session times are short, so the experience is short-lived and the choice to engage or not has no direct consequence on the individual or their life in a meaningful or long term way; this is not real outdoor learning (Phoenix, an adventure worker). The findings showed that such a brief, purely recreational experience teaches little beyond basic skills (Kyle, a young person); true outdoor learning is about moving the boundaries of the individual outwards. Adventure works within these challenges, balancing potentially limiting demands of safety and policy with the aim of pushing comfort zones and developing participants to become all they can be. With the fall in traditional opportunities to play freely (Willett 2008), lesser challenging adventure experiences are valuable and satisfy the mainly urban clientele, but, as the interviews with the young people demonstrated, these are rarely long-lasting learning experiences.

True adventure means potentially being dirty, sweaty, cold, wet, hungry, tired, thirsty: various experiences that allow people to encounter their potential selves. Borrie (1999) highlights excellently the conceptual vision of nature that exists for people today, in a 'disnified' world where nature can be tamed, packaged to appear whatever one wants it to be. The reality of engagement with nature is challenging, sweeping away everything that the individual thought they knew (Maslow 1943):

Maslow's hierarchy gets blown out of the water: comfort zones, being wet and cold, being hungry and you've eaten all your packed lunch at 10 am and can't pop into the kitchen cupboard or ring for a pizza (Sam, a manager).

The research highlighted how the vision young people had of adventure, what they expected from their engagement, did not match with the reality of what they experienced. One can "be really excited" (Emery, a young person), imagining oneself floating gracefully down a rock-face, abseiling in glorious sunshine, laughing and joking. That is how it would appear if it were on television or a computer game. However, when the young person fears "falling to your death" (Lane, a young person), trembling, cold, scared to lower themselves over the edge, their friends shouting and laughing at them, rather than with them,, then the attraction of the warmth and safety of the living room becomes enormously enticing. This is when the adventure worker becomes vital, but also when reality challenges fantasy, the participant is 'stretched' and learning occurs. The evidence emphasised that to be of lasting value, adventure must be more than a 'one off' experience: "you lose by people just coming and just doing the activities" (Finley, a manager); it should be a programme of incremental progression within a structure of learning. In reality, it does not matter if the continuation of the 'one off' is via other activities, such as arts, but adventure has to be a part of a much larger structured programme to be of any real benefit, to produce any transferable learning. The research showed how the

occasional 'one off' thrill of an adventure experience is unconstructive in a learning context (Jules, a group leader). It is almost impossible to undergo intense occasions without learning potential emerging, but it is often even harder for the individual to overcome culture and the environmental, emotional and social stimuli that exist outside of the self but impose upon will. The literature showed how Rogers' (1959) notion of conditional positive regard impacts and has to be overcome before the individual can see themselves anew (Giroux 1995). The research shows how prior knowledge of the individuals supports the process through individualisation, facilitating progression and the realisation of potential: "Pre-working is essential, finding out what people like before exposing them to the experience" (Alex, Adventure Activities Licensing inspector and local authority technical adviser).

The research emphasised that there is an obvious safeguarding responsibility incumbent upon the instructor (Sam, a manager) to ensure that participants are not led to disregard personal safety and believe overly in their own talents, but equally every young person should own and feel proud of their accomplishments (Priest & Gass 2005). As Knight and Anderson (2004) indicate, drawing adventure into too tight a curriculum risks ruining the primary objective: for young people to learn and develop; failure is natural, so there is a danger that poorly constructed programmes can lead young people to be over-confident. From the research, it became clear that participants must be allowed to think through challenges for themselves and to try their own solutions, making failure possible and acceptable (Toby, an adventure worker). The adventure workers intervene as necessary, not being directive throughout. Delivery of adventure is, therefore, a delicate balance between successfully expanding boundaries and avoiding excessive triumph (Prouty, Panicucci & Collinson 2007). The study findings reinforced that without underlying methodology and constant reinforcement of consistent strategic management, the adventure provision lost sight

of the wider potential of what could be achieved, through staff perceiving themselves as being de-skilled through routine delivery of activities. Programmes have become very mechanistic for the Team, with groups booking from a prescriptive menu. Programmes need to be developed by people with a clear understanding of the informal educators whose work underpins learning outcomes, else there will be almost no genuinely profound impact of the outdoor learning (DfES 2002, Young 2005). The findings evidenced that the programmes of the Team provide only a sense of what may be achieved, what individual potential *may* be fulfilled (Phoenix, an adventure worker); this naturally limits the outcome potential for participants (Kahn & Walsh 2006). It is not necessarily a comfortable process, most people would shy away from enduring the relative harshness of their ancestors' lives when the comforts of modern society are so easily within their grasp: "[the staff role is] making sure we're warm and safe" (Cameron, a young person). However, society's shackles can be broken; the individual can overcome Rogers' (1959) conditional positive regard to become personally and emotionally fulfilled: natural endorphins return, the senses enliven, the individual gains control of their thoughts, emotions and life:

How to communicate with others, how to work with people, thinking through how to do things, and how to get what I want if I try (Emery, a young person).

The individual can relax and take a new attitude to the challenges they face. This requires support, though, and the research evidence is that in the gap that existed between the workers and the group leaders, participants ran the risk of not gaining the adequate support that would allow them to progress and achieve as much as they might (Young 2006). Perhaps much of this is an idealised view, but to begin with, the vision of perfection and establishing this as the ultimate goal is surely the best starting point. The research highlighted that within the Authority and, within society, there are necessarily rules and regulations, limits to what can be achieved;

adventure exists in a culture that challenges much of its core beliefs, in that there are legal, moral and social requirements of qualifications, risk assessments, insurances and safeguarding. Whilst necessarily imposed, the evidence is that these can be used to remove the foundation blocks that make adventure so meaningful (Young 2010). Unless they lead from the confines of tamer sessions and 'one off' experiences, on to greater challenges, the research findings were that adventure becomes limited and not educative.

It could be said that many of the basic conditions that exist to necessitate an adventure provision within this Authority arose from existence within an urban culture. The starting point of the individual may be dictated by their life space and their environment (Young 2006), but this only emphasises the distance they are from that point of realisation of their heritage and their potential. The further away from this point the participant starts, the more important it is to take small incremental steps rather than great, leaping bounds (Jeffs & Smith 1999). This reinforces the need highlighted by the research for partnerships between adventure workers and group leaders to facilitate effective joint programmes that will enable the individual to achieve, but to do that within a structure of small, achievable increments that the individual can recognise and to which they can relate. The worker must initially take a fuller role in directing activities ("banking", Freire 1995), gradually moving to empower the participants to become more independent in their thinking and engagement (Gilbertson, Bates, McLaughlin & Ewert 2006). Almost all the young people of the research undertook no prior recognisable or introductory work before engaging with an activity programme, which limited the extent of identifiable progression. Taking the ultimate aim as progression, then each individual will start at a certain point along the pedagogy-andragogy spectrum (Knowles 1990) and must be supported through personalised learning to move slowly towards andragogy and self-actualisation.



## 5.8 The way forward

The culmination of the research study is not solely in the outcomes and responding to the research questions, but in looking ahead and envisaging the implications that the researcher sees in the findings on the impact of the research on professional practice and what further research may be advocated. These research findings suggest a strong connectivity between formal and informal learning within adventure; the prospect exists to use adventure as a powerful tool of delivery. This is not new knowledge (Priest & Gass 2005, Gilbertson, Bates, McLaughlin & Ewert 2006, Prouty, Panicucci & Collinson 2007); the novelty is in proposing to achieve both simultaneously. Young people are adults 'in training', shaped by their environment (Young 2006); the task of learning environments is to cultivate their undiscovered ability, develop their knowledge, awareness and understanding and achieve their potential (Longworth 2004). Evidence over the years of existence of formal education provisions has proved that not all young people can thrive in a classroom environment (Longworth 2004, Benton, Withers & Sodha 2008). Equally, evidence over the years of existence of informal education provisions has proved the value of delivering personal development opportunities (Young 2006, McKee, Oldfield & Poultney 2010). Formal and informal learning form two parts to a cohesive whole, together cultivating knowledgeable and moral members of society, motivated, willing and able to sustain themselves and their community. The findings reinforce the concept that adventure is more than the routine delivery of activities, but a holistic provision offering opportunities to learn skills, build knowledge and competence and develop emotional fortitude, but it also fosters an awareness of nature and a sense of ownership of the environment; it starts with the young person, with their emotional, physical and psychological maturity (Kahn & Walsh 2006). Such a starting position is the basis of youth work (Jefferies & Smith 2007), which is the foundation of this

Team. To be truly effective, the findings show that adventure must look to youth work, become needs led, evidence prior research and analysis of needs by adventure workers; activities should be woven into programmes that meet those needs in a visible and structured way (DfES 2001, DfES 2002). This most appropriately comes from prior interaction between the adventure worker and the group leader. The group leader has an ongoing relationship with the young people and is delivering the adventure session(s) within a wider programme. The group leader is, however, not the best-placed person to determine the most that can be achieved from the adventure activity, that is the remit of the adventure worker. The partnership therefore ensures extracting the most learning within a tailored programme.

The activity is not and cannot be the sole focus of the session, but is a means to an end, a tool with which a greater goal is achieved (Priest & Gass 2005). Formal learning programmes have a focus on skill attainment, but too much of a product focus turns the adventure session into merely an outdoor classroom lesson (Knight & Anderson 2004). Too often at present, the adventure workers become focussed on the purity of their craft, rather than locating the session within the capacity of the participants; concentrating on perfecting paddle strokes or climbing technique, loses sight of the progressive impact of the experience. The adventure workers need to place greater emphasis on the reflective capabilities that enable learning, accepting that activity achievement may not be maximised, but learning can be (Kolb 2004, Moon 2004). Ultimately, adventure should open an exciting and enticing doorway to a pathway of lifelong learning (Longworth 2004, Loynes 2004). The evidence here is that young people are open to activities and receptive to new experiences but this receptivity is lost when young people feel they are not achieving or when the session becomes too formalised, the very reasons they may not have been achieving in school. To this end, the findings show that to be meaningful, adventure should have clear links to

other areas of young people's lives. They cannot make sense of adventure or learn from it, if it appears in isolation to everything else with which they are engaged or to their home environment. To achieve this, it is evidenced by the findings that adventure should be properly prefaced and reviewed (Priest & Gass 2005). The introduction should allow participants to build towards their engagement, setting the activity into an appropriate context. The subsequent debrief should explore process and learning, relative to how it may be applied elsewhere (Kolb 1984). The premise of situated learning (Lave & Wenger 1991:29) suggests that learning unintentionally gained is not readily transferable to other situations or contexts. However, with support from adventure workers, participants are able to understand and contextualise their learning, realising its applicability and transferability. To achieve this, the session structure needs to be revisited by the Team, re-evaluating format and process; activities and outcomes will become pre-defined by developing the agreed reference material, but the basic competency of incorporating reflection and self-directed learning comes from knowledge and understanding of the processes (Prouty, Panicucci & Collinson 2007). There should be that reflective element in every adventure worker's function that goes beyond simply evaluating the session in isolation but explores whether that session should be run the same in the future or what should be done differently, how the participants could be inspired more or progressed more.

That adventure workers are the foundation of the provision is clear from the research findings. The workers should understand the principles of the National Curriculum and of informal learning. The research evidence is that to achieve this, workers need more than the (extrinsic) rewards that provide the means to meet their basic needs (Maslow 1943) but clear fulfilment of their (intrinsic) emotional needs (Thomas 2000); adventure workers need to feel engaged and useful,

that their input is of benefit. At present, apathy has materialised, as the adventure workers feel they are operating at a level beneath them and they appear to exist away from the core of the Authority. The passion and drive of the workers is the driving force in how they deliver a session; the participants derive their stimulus from the worker in front of them and this determines their response and interaction (Gilbertson, Bates, McLaughlin & Ewert 2006), an essential element to motivating young people, stimulating them to achieve (Goleman 1995, Adair 1996).

The research evidence is that to exist within a meaningful context the Team has to be accountable to the Authority, its users and the public purse (DfES 2001) and to exist within the Authority culture, bringing understanding and identity within the organisation. To develop a Team with a more defined structure and closer unity with the wider Authority will bring the Team to have a much higher sense of itself, improving morale and giving it a loftier sense of purpose than it has had to date. This in turn will bring a better Team profile and bring the workers to build their self-esteem and a realisation that they are fulfilling the higher calling of the Authority than of the immediate adventure sessions (Senge 1990).

#### 5.9 Implications for policy and practice

This research is seen as the basis for further research within the field of adventure and its interaction with formal and informal learning. This research has provided an indication of the way in which formal and informal learning may be combined through adventure to produce improved outcomes. It is, however, only an indication. Much more research should now be conducted in exploring the range of adventure provisions that exist within the public and private sectors and the ways that these can be engaged to address formal and informal learning. Research also needs to be undertaken to explore how specific activities can be combined in meeting the outcomes desired and required of formal and informal learning and

how these may be embedded more deeply in the assessment processes for young people. Particularly there is scope for research into how alternative learning styles may be used to support learning and assessment in young people who suffer specific conditions, such as dyslexia. Creative approaches to learning that encourage “questioning, debate, experimentation, presentation and critical reflection” (Ofsted 2010) are emphasised by Ofsted as facilitating effective, embedded learning.

This study is intended as a springboard to research the legacy of the ‘Every Child Matters: Change for Children’ (ECM) initiative (DfES 2003) and the Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Manifesto (DfES 2005). Both were fundamental in the previous administration’s portfolio; local authorities and other agencies invested substantial resources in developing the structures and procedures required to try to enact changes to implement the requirements. Since its inauguration, the incoming administration has neither strengthened nor removed either. This may be an indication of tacit support or of absolute disinterest. However, the field is now open for comprehensive research to explore how each initiative influenced local authorities and whether practice remains within their guidance.

#### 5.10 Conclusion

The findings of this research emphasise the potential of adventure to meet a range of needs: ice breaking, address issues, emphasise learning. Firstly, adventure can act as a springboard to engage young people and capture their interest before moving to address other needs and issues. Secondly, adventure can serve as a tool in personal and social education, helping participants learn how to live, thrive and survive. Adventure can be used as a formal education tool, to provide a mechanism outside the classroom for teaching the National Curriculum. Finally, adventure can be simply a thrilling, adrenalin-fuelled recreational experience with no learning attached, a fun activity to relax the body and free the mind:

An ideal learning environment then would be one which provides for the basic physiological and safety needs, and provides a community building, team or social environment before attempting to achieve the higher level task of learning (Cain 2003).

This Team engages with urban young people who know nothing but the towns and cities of their environment; they have little idea of nature, of their natural heritage, of the fragility of the world they will inherit. Society has a responsibility to teach young people about the world, about their duty for its stewardship, about respecting our natural resources and valuing nature's provisions. The research demonstrated that through adventure, participants have the opportunity to learn and understand in a fun way. By participating in adventurous activities, the research showed how young people develop a natural awareness and appreciation for the natural environment around them. It is not just an activity session, a field trip, a 'treat' of a week at an outdoor centre. Responsible education involves promoting the value of learning and making the experience as individual and as meaningful as possible. By cultivating a valuing of the outdoors, it is not only the learner who benefits but also society. As voters and citizens, people can have a bigger impact on issues involving natural resources if they understand nature, becoming therefore empowered through knowledge and experience.

The research has shown the capacity for adventure to be a holistic learning tool, fulfilling the demands of the National Curriculum whilst simultaneously stimulating and developing young people to become motivated, social beings. Adventure must become a tool of learning at least as equally respected for all its facets and potential as the classroom, recognised for the contribution it makes to learning. The process curriculum outcomes of adventure are well documented (Knight & Anderson 2004, Priest & Gass 2005, Dismore & Bailey 2005, English Outdoor Council 2005, DfES 2006, Gilbertson, Bates, McLaughlin & Ewert 2006, Prouty, Panicucci & Collinson 2007, DCSF 2009, House of Commons 2010). Less well presented has been the

potential of adventure to support formal learning, and this is a crucial area for future research, as well as how formal and informal learning entwine within adventure. Although this research has highlighted the ability of adventure to meet multiple agendas, more research is required to explore intricately how this can be achieved. The implication of this research has to be to lend credence to the notion that duality of outcomes is desirable and achievable, to facilitate the engagement of young people in meaningful developmental learning that will stimulate interest and foster motivation. Young people are naturally curious and want to learn, the philosophy of adventure builds on that:

No one has to teach an infant how to learn. In fact, no one has to teach infants anything. They are intrinsically inquisitive, masterful learners who learn to walk, speak, and pretty much run their households all on their own (Senge 1990:4).

This in turn promotes future inspiration and impetus to engage and achieve, the spur to lifelong learning and ultimately a learning nation: “the more you learn, the more acutely aware you become of your ignorance” (Senge 1990:11).

The current environment in which local authorities exist is one of acute change and financial pressure. Whilst endeavouring to maintain provision and positive achievements within Government stringency, local authorities have to look to working differently, working ‘smarter’ in achieving their aims (C4EO 2010:51). The opportunity to achieve a number of positive outcomes in a range of target areas has to be attractive and make economic sense. Adventure can do this, with its potential to accomplish goals in formal and informal learning, health and citizenship agendas. Practitioners must look to champion their cause, promote the potential of their profession and lobby policy makers to embrace the ‘Learning Outside the Classroom’ agenda fully. Adventure workers need now to recognise the positive promise of the Authority changes and restructures enforced in the current economic

climate, centralising themselves as a vital component of social policy. Their route to doing this lies in ensuring the structure, policies, procedures and partnerships are in place that emphasize their achievements and evidence their accountability to the public purse as being a cost effective provision whilst serving social need.



## CHAPTER 6: DISSEMINATION

This research aims to develop adventure into a recognised learning tool, complementing traditional techniques and engaging young people in a lifelong voyage of learning, knowledge and discovery. To do that, the findings have to be cascaded out to the field (Duggan and Banwell, 2004). Carpenter, Nieva, Albaghal and Sorra (undated) describe dissemination as an “active, tailored process of communication”. This research is primarily a doctoral thesis for personal academic progression; therefore, dissemination is ultimately so geared. Yet the object of the research, the Team, is within an organisation and the thesis is aimed at developing adventure through the organisation within which the Team is based. Hence, dissemination is also to be directed through the organisation.

The time between data collection and completion of the final thesis was considered such that the researcher developed a dissemination strategy for the organisation and the participants prior to the thesis being deemed finalised. Dissemination to the professional and organisational audiences hence came following data analysis but prior to submission of the thesis. Harmsworth and Turpin (2000) present three levels of disseminated information: raising awareness, understanding and action. All three were applicable in the initial dissemination, as the different participants had varying interests in knowing the preliminary findings. Young people were of the first level; they wanted an overview of the study and its outcomes, neither needing nor wanting detail. The group leaders were of the second level, as their work would benefit from the outcomes and observations; they cannot necessarily effect change but they can form an effective pressure group to lobby those with power. The adventure workers and the managers were of the third level as they are the agents of change, able to develop policy and practice.

The nature of the provision meant that the young people and the group leaders were dispersed, not easily accessed. It was considered

unnecessary individually to distribute the findings. Each adventure centre has large display areas, all within public visibility. The researcher developed displays showing the study and principal findings. It cannot be ascertained how many studied the boards, nor how they considered the findings. The Team required a more direct distribution of the findings and therefore the researcher arranged a team meeting at which the findings were presented. The adventure workers found resonance with the findings. The intention of the study was to effect positive change within policy and practice. Changes do not have to be major reforms, but small adaptations. The aim of dissemination was to encourage discourse, awaken reflexive consciousness and try to prevent practices from becoming 'stale' and ineffective. The meeting was considered by the researcher a success; it generated discussion on effecting change and addressing barriers. Dissemination to managers began with a meeting between the researcher and the Service Head of the Youth Service. This was to explore the initial study findings and discuss how to cascade these across the Authority. However, this process and the initiation of change were prematurely curtailed with cost reviews and structural change. The Head of the Youth Service moved to divisional lead and the decision was taken to merge the participating Adventure Team with that of the Education Service. Discussions and proposals for change within the Team were therefore suspended to the time that the merger took place. The researcher was then relocated within the Authority to a completely different department and could no longer be involved with the Team.

In terms of thesis dissemination, the study is considered the basis for future work; therefore, in thesis form it is no more than an academic document.

## CHAPTER 7: REFLECTIONS

The research study has not been purely an exercise in studying an Adventure Team, nor in preparing a doctoral thesis. It has been a very personal apprenticeship towards an academic achievement. Having spent so many months scrutinising literature and developing a greater understanding of the field, before investing time building the methodology, there is an enormous personal element to the study, especially given the ultimate goal of submission for one of the highest academic accolades possible.

This is a research study in which the researcher has a close personal interest. Having decided upon a study that entailed examination of one's own Team, the study posed as much a personal challenge to examine, evaluate, confirm and assert personal beliefs, as it facilitated the personal permission to take time to absorb literature and articles of the field:

I sometimes feel a bit guilty in spending time 'at work' looking at things for my dissertation, but I'm finding that it all becomes so mixed. There's so much that I can pull in to programme planning and getting the training programme together (Personal Reflective Notes).

It is easy to become so absorbed in the daily routine, in the established tunnel of practice, that one loses the desire and capacity to challenge oneself. When something appears to work well, it is easy to lose the impulsion to look if there is a better way and to relax reflexive practice. It takes conscious effort continually to strive to improve.

### *7.1 Universality*

This research was independent, the selection of the researcher, and not commissioned by the Authority. There was no official direction provided by the Authority and therefore the research has not been subject to any constraints, directions or organisational design. This has enabled the research to be undertaken without external pressure

and for the findings to be unhindered by organisational expectation. The research however has had to be conducted within a professional environment as a requirement of the doctoral programme and had to adhere to the requirements of that programme. The environment elected was that of the researcher's profession, providing intimate knowledge of the field and experienced insight into the organisation. Impartial, proficient and competent investigation was facilitated by maintaining a strict distinction between the professional and the research functions. For the researcher, the research enabled the opportunity for more reflective practice, to consider more deeply the processes engaged in the professional role and to analyse more intricately the impacts resulting. The research process also enabled perceptions to be broadened in consideration of the wider relationships and potential of the subject (adventure) than that achieved when one is immersed in one's profession alone.

At no point during this research has it been intended to derive any absolute universal findings (generalisations). The pilot study engaged a separate Authority Adventure Team for the practical reason of preserving the mainstream data and the principal study has always been intended as a singular case study of one Authority Adventure Team. As a single intrinsic case study, no claimed universality could be viewed as wholly reliable, a "fuzzy logic" (Bassey 1998). However, given the recent focus and universality of the drive to engage young people in positive activities (DCSF 2007, 2009) and the popularity of the engagement of the Learning Outside The Classroom Manifesto (DfES 2006), there are possible principles that have general applicability to all (local authority) outdoor learning provisions, whatever their size and nature. There may even be some relevance to organisations not within the public sector. The adventure workers and managers of the Team were able to recognise and identify with some of the disseminated research findings, which offered some partial degree of generalisation to the study.

## 7.2 *The process*

Entering the research study as both researcher and employee of the Team and organisation being researched was both a comfortable and a daunting position. It was comfortable in that the organisation and its staff were known, there was no time having to be spent at the start of the study in understanding the processes and systems; the Team and organisation jargon was understood and the researcher was accepted without question, people behaved as they normally would. It was a daunting position because the interaction as researcher was different to that of employee (although this was equally refreshing) and the researcher felt a change in the balance of power. Overall, it was an invigorating but challenging experience to undertake the study, bringing a sense of contributing to something that can really affect practice in a positive way:

Here we go! Quite clear in my head of where I'm going and what I want to achieve, but still not entirely sure of how I'll get there! Occasional flashes of beginning to realise the enormity of what I'm taking on – slight panic moments (Personal Reflective Notes).

All the managers had been notified in advance to present the study and its aims and purpose, but organising the interviews themselves had been a routine process of dealing with personal assistants and administrative support workers to arrange dates and times, so the researcher had not been certain of the extent to which managers would commit to the data collection:

I had expected the usual flippant comments and jokes from Rowan because that's his nature and how conversations usually go with him. But he took the whole thing really seriously, as a proper interview (Field Notes Interview 6);

It felt very strange to be sat in front of Reese and feel that I was in charge of the process! In the past I've felt like I was in front of the school head, even though we have a good working relationship, there's a certain degree of diffidence you give the higher bods (Field Notes Interview 9).

The management took the process far more seriously than the peer workers of the researcher did. The workers had known of the study from the start, knowing it as a personal progressive decision, not an organisational requirement. There therefore seemed to be an amused tolerance to the project, which some workers saw as being an academic exercise only and not of any value or importance:

It's not going to be used for anything other than Uni  
(Field Notes Interview 11 – comment made outside of interview);

Well, if it's for Uni then by the time it's finished it'll all be out of date anyway (Field Notes Interview 4 – comment made outside of interview).

Equally, the peers on that basis accepted the study as a personal endeavour and adopted a sympathetic stance, rather than the cynical approach that may have come from the programme being seen as organisationally mandated. This proved a positive element as well, in that the workers entered the data collection relaxed and open in their contribution. Approaching the workers to arrange interviews was not an issue and they all took a stance of it being a welcome opportunity to take time to discuss themselves.

Approaching the group leaders had been straightforward enough, having analysed which groups would be approached. Being an employee of the Team meant that the researcher already had some vague acquaintanceship with the group leaders and so many had been aware of the research long before the time came to discuss participation:

[Rowan] seemed to have really thought through his answers in advance! He was ready for every question, even though he hadn't seen them prior to meeting. Really stimulating (Field Notes Interview 26).

The young people seemed to take the interview process in their stride, displaying no nervousness and very little hesitation in their responses. Many seemed to find the process enjoyable, perhaps because they had volunteered to participate:

Sat with [Emery] made me realise just how far she's come since I first met her. She thought about every response and was anxious to make sure I understood her meaning (Field Notes Interview 23);

[Avery] spoke clearly and confidently throughout, checking regularly that I was writing the answers down (Field Notes Interview 29).

Many of the young people seemed fascinated that an adult should be engaged in a learning process akin to something they would understand. This seemed to heighten their interest in the study and foster a greater desire to participate.

The process of participant observation seemed less like data gathering because the researcher was engaged in a known role, which made the process more comfortable. The young people and peer workers accepted the role and were not perceived to have behaved any differently to how they would if the observation were not taking place. For the researcher, being a 'second' to another worker was definitely of benefit because it allowed that opportunity to 'stand back', to watch more than direct:

Muttering quietly into the recorder, which seemed less obtrusive than scribbling on bits of paper that might blow away or get wet (Field Notes Participant Observation 4).

Playing less of a leading role during the activity also enabled the researcher to 'target' specific young people in conversation and not to have to maintain an overall view of the group, allowing for talk that would contribute to the findings. The desire of the researcher to come to the fore to lead an introduction and review phase to each observed session was welcomed heartily by peer workers, as this was the part of the session least interesting and stimulating to them.

Each form of data collection did not happen in a sequential order or in isolation, but mingled throughout the period. This allowed the secondary data (documents and computer databases) to fall into a better context throughout, becoming guided to a certain extent by

the interviews and the participant observation. The secondary data at times was a less comfortable form of data collection:

Questioning people about the documents they've written can seem a bit intrusive at times and from their responses I sometimes think they don't welcome it (Personal Reflective Notes).

The hardest part of the secondary data review was where to begin. In the years of existence of the Team and the Authority there has been a wealth of documentation produced and the most overwhelming and disheartening feelings arose at the start in just trying to figure out a starting point. As with many such issues, as time progressed and more documentation was scrutinised, the list became more and more refined and logic appeared.

The lowest point to the study came in the months following the general election of May 2010. The ensuing changes to the prevailing political climate and the accompanying cost cutting and cost saving measures brought Authority plans, reviews and structures under intense scrutiny in a remarkably short period of time that had not been envisaged or anticipated by the study:

Every day there's another email or another memo about a change or a departure. The rumour mill is running riot and the stress levels throughout the Team are rising steadily (Personal Reflective Notes).

It brought with it a fear that the work on the study to date would become redundant and that the research project would be irrelevant and the thesis process would have to start again. Rationality became lost for a while in the "fits of thesis rage" (Personal Reflective Notes) that ensued and the emotional turmoil that accompanied the process of trying to work out how to move forward. Control was eventually re-asserted and the decision made to complete the research study in the way that it has been, using the data collected in the allotted period prior to the changes, with the possibility arising that future research studies could move this study forward, taking account at that point of any changes.



### 7.3 *The methodology*

The methodology devised was of a singular case study approach within a qualitative paradigm, using interviewing, participant observation and secondary data as the means of gathering the data. These questions were to explore the interrelationship between formal and informal learning with adventure and then to examine the nature of the provision of that Team and the effectiveness of the learning achieved by the young people engaging with the provisions of the Team. Given the parameters of the study established, the methodology appears by the researcher to have been appropriate and served the purposes required well. The findings and conclusions drawn met the needs of the study more than adequately and, having meticulously formulated the research methodology, there were no unforeseen issues encountered in executing the planned strategy.

Having critical friends from within the organisation to the study, as well as the thesis supervisor from the University, provided reassurance and valuable opportunities to discuss and explore with different perspectives:

I suppose it's reassuring to know that my emotional state is quite normal at this stage (Personal Reflective Notes).

Having 'support' from both aspects of the study entailed "questions, challenges, debates and defending the content" (Personal Reflective Notes) of matters the researcher often assumed to be common knowledge, which ensured that the research methodology became robust and the study retained balance.

Having evaluated the options and assessed case study to be the appropriate approach, the decision to allocate a single period of three consecutive months for the data collection meant that the data was gathered in a period of stability for the Team, without undue external influences. The longitudinal, iterative approach of grounded theory or even action research would have brought the data potentially to be

skewed through the political and structural impacts upon the Authority. The paradigmatic choice was always the constructivist end of the positivist-constructivist spectrum, with the depiction of the Team being built from the input of its participants. However, to gain profundity of understanding, it was beneficial that the input be representative of the participants and not swayed by factors affecting their disposition in an unusual way. Collecting the data through a stable period contributed to the integrity of the results through the findings derived being determined by the input, which itself was not influenced by extraneous circumstances.

The focus of the study has always been to the primary objective of completing a doctoral thesis. With that in mind, the methodology concentrated on the immediate locus of operation of the Team. There was no consideration given to drawing data that would enable comparison to be made with other teams. Equally, the leadership style and the culture of the Team were not compared with other teams within the Authority or generally with other Teams of other Authorities or agencies. Such a study would provide comparative data to strengthen or challenge the findings of this singular case study.

The intention of the study has always been towards the singular assessment of the one Team. This was for the professional purpose of developing and improving practice within that one Team. The focus, however, defines the weakness of the research in terms of generalisability. The study findings cannot be presumed to be universal across all local authorities or across all adventure provisions. A further and more wide-ranging study that involved more local authorities and included both public and private sector adventure provisions would be required to enable a greater reliability of outcomes to be drawn.

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## INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS – YOUNG PEOPLE

Project intro – use of data – confidentiality – report distribution – signed participant statement

- a) Tell me a little about yourself – what you like doing, where you go to school, your family, what you do in your free time
- b) How long have you been involved with Adventure (hours or sessions)
- c) With what other provisions do you engage (youth club, YET, Arts, scouts, etc)
- d) How do your experiences with those organisations compare you're your experience of Adventure

### 1) Be healthy

- e) Did you choose to come here or was it compulsory
- f) What activities have you done here (all)
- g) How often do you/have you come here to do any activities
- h) Were these 'one offs' or part of a longer programme
- i) What sport / activities do you normally do
- j) What feelings did you have about coming here
- k) What (if any) worries or concerns have you had about coming here

### 2) Stay safe

- l) What risks do you think there are in the activities that you will do whilst you are here
- m) How do you think that these are managed by the staff here
- n) How were the groups chosen to come here from school
- o) How was the decision made in splitting that group into the activity group once you got here
- p) How do you feel about the way that choice was made

- 3) Enjoy & achieve
  - q) How aware were you of why you were coming here and what you should be learning/gaining from being here
  - r) Was there any review of the activity and what you learnt when you finished
  - s) What do you think you learnt
  - t) Did you want to come here
  - u) How does this fit in with what you do at school
  - v) What did you expect to get from coming here
  
- 4) Make a positive contribution
  - w) How will you engage further of your own accord (if at all) in any adventurous activity
  - x) Is there anything that you learnt here that you think you could transfer to other areas of your life
  - y) Have any of the relationships changed with people within your group attending here
  
- 5) Achieve economic well-being
  - z) What did you learn about yourself through these activities
  - aa) How challenging did you expect the activities to be here
  - bb) What have you gained from being here
  - cc) How does your experience in adventure here compare with other things that you have experienced in your life (e.g. challenging things like leaving school, going to college)

I need to try to determine what you have learnt in the time that you have been here

1. Can you mark yourself from 1 (low) to 5 (high) on each of the following BEFORE you came here

Confidence	1	2	3	4	5
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Leadership	1	2	3	4	5
Self esteem	1	2	3	4	5
Group work	1	2	3	4	5
Communication	1	2	3	4	5
Motivation	1	2	3	4	5

2. Can you mark yourself from 1 (low) to 5 (high) on each of the following AFTER you came here

Confidence	1	2	3	4	5
Leadership	1	2	3	4	5
Self esteem	1	2	3	4	5
Group work	1	2	3	4	5
Communication	1	2	3	4	5
Motivation	1	2	3	4	5

How would you rate your Adventure experiences in the following comparisons

- 1) Junk food – uncontrolled and only very limited levels of short-term satisfaction.
- 2) Fast food – quick thrills and 'one off' but standards are variable and needs to be supplemented with a wider-ranging diet
- 3) Healthy food – natural, simple and impactful
- 4) Gourmet food – a rare and 'one off' treat

1. Would you like to make any comment or give any views on your engagement with adventure
2. Is there any way you think that the adventure provision could be improved



## INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS – WORKERS

Project intro – use of data – confidentiality – report distribution – signed participant statement

- a) Tell me something of your role within the Team and what activities you personally can deliver
- b) What are the aims and objectives of the Adventure Team
- c) How do you know that you are achieving these
- d) To what extent does the Team collaborate with people making a booking regarding programme aims
- e) To what extent do you engage in inter-agency work
- f) How do you ensure that you contribute to achieving REYS outcomes
- g) How does adventure fit into the ECM framework
- h) How do you ensure that you work to the YS Curriculum
- i) How does the Adventure Team fit into the C&YPS
- j) Where do the safeguarding responsibilities lie within your work when working with 'other people's' groups
- k) How often (if ever) have you made a safeguarding referral
- l) How often do you signpost young people to other youth provisions or support services
- m) How do you market activities or target particular groups
- n) How accessible is the offer to minority groups (e.g. gender, ethnicity)
- o) What (if any) theory underpins the work of the Adventure Team
- p) What social need is addressed through Adventure
- q) Why would/should groups/young people engage with adventure (benefits)
- r) How educative is adventure
- s) How can adventurous activities be used as a form of informal learning

- t) What is the benefit of 'one off' sessions
  - u) What sustained outcomes do you believe come from engagement with adventure
  - v) What transferable skills come from engagement with adventure
  - w) How are these drawn out of young people
  - x) Is there any 'follow up' with young people after their activity booking is over
  - y) How do you assess the 'start point' and 'end point' (distance travelled) of young people engaging in activities
  - z) To what extent is the offer by the Adventure Team driven by informal learning/personal development (as opposed to activity delivery)
  - aa) To what extent is the offer by the Adventure Team driven by THE LOCAL AUTHORITY SMT/policies & procedures
  - bb) What do you envisage to be the future for THE LOCAL AUTHORITY Adventure Team
- 
1. Would you like to make any comment or give any views on your engagement with adventure
  2. Is there any way you think that the adventure provision could be improved

## INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS – MANAGEMENT TEAM

Project intro – use of data – confidentiality – report distribution – signed participant statement

- a) Can you tell me something of your role and how you are involved with the Adventure Team
- b) What was your personal experience of adventure as a young person
- c) What did you gain from this
- d) How does this affect your opinion now of THE LOCAL AUTHORITY YS Adventure Team
- e) What do you believe are the key drivers of the Adventure Team
- f) What contribution does the Adventure Team make to YS outcomes (e.g. REYS)
- g) What do you believe is the proportion of THE LOCAL AUTHORITY income to income generation within adventure
- h) How important is this income generation to the Council (necessary evil of rebuild)
- i) How does the Adventure Team fit into the C&YPS?
- j) Why have an Adventure Team (unique offer)
- k) What are the strategic aims & objectives for adventure
- l) How do you measure VFM/best value for adventure
- m) How can you justify sustained investment in adventure
- n) How do you believe that the youth work methodology (informal learning) is applied through adventure within this specific Team
- o) What (if any) social need is met through adventure
- p) What is the benefit of 'one off' sessions
- q) What sustained outcomes do you believe come from engagement with adventure
- r) What transferable skills come from engagement with adventure

- s) If you had a free reign, how would you structure adventure within THE LOCAL AUTHORITY YS?
  - 1. Would you like to make any comment or give any views on your engagement with adventure
  - 2. Is there any way you think that the adventure provision could be improved

## INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS – GROUP LEADERS

Project intro – use of data – confidentiality – report distribution – signed participant statement

- a) Tell me something of your role and the function you fulfil in being here
- b) Is this programme a 'stand alone' programme or a module of a wider organisational programme
- c) What are the aims and objectives of the programme being delivered through Adventure
- d) How do you know that you are achieving these
- e) To what extent have you collaborated with the Adventure Team in making your booking regarding the programme aims
- f) Are there any external (e.g. Government) targets or aims being met through this programme
- g) How does this programme fit into the ECM framework
- h) How did you select who could attend this programme
- i) Why would/should groups/young people engage with adventure (benefits)
- j) How educative is adventure
- k) How can adventurous activities be used as a form of informal learning
- l) What is the benefit of 'one off' sessions
- m) What sustained outcomes do you believe come from engagement with adventure
- n) What transferable skills come from engagement with adventure
- o) What subsequent work do you do with young people to draw these out
- p) Is there any follow-up work with the young people who have engaged with Adventure to determine sustained development
- q) (If not) how do you measure outcomes for the young people

- r) How do you assess the 'start point' and 'end point' (distance travelled) of young people engaging in activities
- 1. Would you like to make any comment or give any views on your engagement with adventure
- 2. Is there any way you think that the adventure provision could be improved

## Interview schedule:

Interview 1	Worker	Toby	Adventure Team
Interview 2	Young person	Taylor	County Youth Group
Interview 3	Young person	Sawyer	Statutory Youth Group
Interview 4	Worker	Sasha	Adventure Team
Interview 5	Manager	Sam	Tier 5 manager*
Interview 6	Manager	Rowan	Tier 4 manager*
Interview 7	Young person	Rory	Statutory Youth Group
Interview 8	Group Leader	Riley	Own Youth group
Interview 9	Manager	Reese	Tier 3 manager*
Interview 10	Group Leader	Quinn	Out of County Youth group
Interview 11	Worker	Phoenix	Adventure Team
Interview 12	Young person	Mason	Own Youth group
Interview 13	Young person	Lane	Own Youth group
Interview 14	Manager	Kennedy	Tier 3 manager*
Interview 15	Young person	Kyle	Own Youth group
Interview 16	Group Leader	Jules	County Youth group
Interview 17	Young person	Jordan	Statutory Youth group
Interview 18	Worker	Jess	Adventure Team
Interview 19	Manager	Harper	Tier 4 manager*
Interview 20	Manager	Finley	Tier 5 manager*
Interview 21	Young person	Evan	County Youth group
Interview 22	Young person	Emery	County Youth group
Interview 23	Worker	Dylan	Adventure Team
Interview 24	Worker	Devon	Adventure Team
Interview 25	Group Leader	Dana	Statutory Youth group
Interview 26	Young person	Cameron	Out of County Youth group
Interview 27	Young person	Bailey	Out of County Youth group
Interview 28	Young person	Avery	Out of County Youth group
Interview 29	AALS	Alex	Supplementary interview

There are seven tiers from Chief Executive to front-line workers, five of these are considered management grades

Avery (a young person)	13.01.10 Trent Room, [Adventure Base]
Manner	Quite relaxed – sat in a soft chair, laid back with one leg over the arm most of the time, but focussed on the interview and not playing with a 'phone, or fiddling with an iPod. Natural mannerisms like running fingers through the hair, but nothing to indicate feeling uncomfortable or stressed at being in the interview
Speech	Spoke clearly and confidently throughout, checking regularly that I was writing the answers down, short answers but very clear
Hesitation at questions?	None – the odd moment of thinking about an answer but nothing major
Declined any questions?	None
Focus	Absolute, looking directly at me to answer questions – until it got to being close to the time for the session.
	<p>Quite a quiet room, in the courtyard but the windows are darkened so no-one can see in, and it's the only room with soft chairs, not set out with tables and hard chairs, so it's really informal and sets a good informal atmosphere in as much as it's more comfortable, but we were still at the adventure base and within the atmosphere of adventure and the field of the interview.</p> <p>I thought [Avery] was a shy person, normally so quiet and always at the back, but in the on-to-one interview [Avery] was relaxed, clear and seemed totally interested in the research. Despite that, I never felt that the instructor/participant or YW/YP role was breached, which was a shame. However hard I tried, it still felt like that differential existed. I don't think it detracted from the interview, but I wondered if the answers might have been fuller if the interviewer had been a peer – retrospectively, wonder if I could have 'trained' a YP to do the participant interviews for me?</p> <p>Unrecorded conversation ran around whether I would be able to let YP know of the findings, and how CH is taking to having me research the team.</p>



Dylan (adventure worker)	13.01.10 Group room at [Adventure Base]
Manner	Relaxed and full answers, sat forward all the time, animated, very lively speaker with lots of hand gestures, very confident. Uses quite a lot of practical examples, which was helpful and very clear in thinking and opinions
Speech	Unhesitating, no pauses to check the recorder or check understanding
Hesitation at questions?	None at all, all answers flowed very naturally
Declined any questions?	None
Focus	Dylan is very clear in beliefs, quite a lot of experience from other places, which makes quite a difference in that there is a lot to draw on. The view is very clear, knows exactly what should be said!
	<p>Room is less formal than sat in an office but not comfortable, set out with hard chairs and tables. It's where the groups come to be told what they're doing etc so it's set up to focus the mind – not quite a classroom, but just really a different layout, same furniture!</p> <p>Wasn't a totally relaxed atmosphere, think that came from me as I felt quite nervous interviewing a peer. There's a big variation in our life narratives as Dylan is pure adventure, lives and breathes it in personal and private life, loves the whole living off the land bit. Adopted a bit of a subservient approach as it made Dylan feel more authoritative and as if controlling the interview, worked well!</p> <p>There is a huge difference between seeing Dylan work and talking face-to-face. Knows the game well – the theory, process, etc is all there and Dylan can talk really impressively about learning processes, informal learning, how the NC could be drawn into adventure, etc. But then you watch Dylan work and there's none of that evident – it's straight into the session, kit distributed, get into the action. Then at the end there's no linkage to any learning or to any particular subject. Maybe he just works that way when there's a definite plan/programme, but it seems really ineffective, such a waste of potential.</p> <p>Unrecorded conversation ran around Dylan's view of the LA and how generally there's a difference between what's demanded/expected and what Dylan thinks can be achieved. Dylan's commitment and loyalty is to adventure first and foremost, I wonder whether that is at odds with being within a LA</p>

Sam (a manager)	15.12.09 Meeting room @ [adventure base]
Manner	Started quite stiff, but eased into it quite quickly. Spoke quietly, very earnest and serious, but still very definite in opinions. Not very animated, but sat quite upright, very aware of self. No apparent nervous gestures, seemed in control all the time.
Speech	Quiet, affirmative voice, checked the recorder a couple of times, but generally seemed to be knowledgeable and definite in answers
Hesitation at questions?	None, very few pauses for thought
Declined any questions?	None
Focus	Very clearly experienced and knows exactly what he thinks; lot of LA experience with some external experience thrown in so has some breadth to bring. Obviously corporate focus, knows the theory of what should be happening, but appears to have little knowledge of what actually happens within the team!
	<p>Atmosphere was formal, no tables to lean on, chairs were arranged face-to-face. Took the deferential manager/employee approach so that Sam felt 'superior' and in control of the interview, by seeming like I'm meek and subservient, it seemed to bring Sam out and opened up more.</p> <p>Sam obviously knows a lot, has a lot of experience, but there seemed a real difference between what Sam thinks is going on and the processes of adventure and the reality. Obviously knowing the relationships I can read something into what's said and being established in the team I can identify distinctions but nonetheless it seems that Sam is assuming a lot without knowing.</p>

Dana (a group leader)	18.01.10 Trent Room @ [adventure base]
Manner	Came across as very relaxed and jovial, seemed to take the whole thing a lot less than seriously. Sat drinking coffee, eating biscuits, wouldn't have thought Dana was there because of bringing a group from school.
Speech	Bubbly, quite short answers
Hesitation at questions?	Some, got the impression a couple of times Dana was trying to work out what the answer should be, rather than speaking from honesty
Declined any questions?	None
Focus	Aside from the coffee and biscuits (brought by Dana, not provided – never thought to offer refreshments!), quite focussed. Obviously not terribly knowledgeable about adventure, even though Dana is the one who manages the programme in school and organised these sessions.
	Incredibly laid back approach and felt almost too informal, almost wanted to tell Dana to take this more seriously! It felt very much like this was a respite for Dana, every week for a day Dana gets to come to the base, perhaps mark some schoolwork or plan some lessons, perhaps read the paper or go for a walk around the res. Never seen Dana actually be there with any of the YP or participate, only gets called on if someone kicks off. As a teacher, Dana seems to see this as a time to have a break and catch up or chill out. It can't be an easy programme to run (Level 1 learners achievement group) but it made me question whether Dana had organised these activities specifically so that there could be this respite, without thinking to put in any effort to plan a programme of learning, whether Dana had given up on the YP in the first place. The objective of the group, I know, is for these YP to achieve a portfolio of certificates and accreditations prior to leaving school as they aren't expected to get any GCSEs. Having run those at BYDP, I know how hard those programmes are but it frustrates me that so much is not done for these YP.

## Participant observation

Date	06/02/11	Group	(name removed) District Youth Assembly
Activity	Multi-activity day	Group leaders	LOADS! YW staff & DYA staff
Weather	Dry, warm for time of year	Staff	Everyone! 7 adventure workers
<p>Aim(s) of session: Team building and bonding session around defining code of practice for DYA – fun and communication key desirables</p>			
<p>Enthusiasm of group: The YP who came first were really enthusiastic and bouncing all over the place when they got there, ready to get going straight away. However it took so long to get everyone there and to get the first session started that the momentum was lost and they were feeling deflated. The late arrivals also were tired / hungover / not motivated and that had a detrimental effect on the YP already there.</p>			
<p>Brief/intro: None! The workers were just anxious to get started doing something and went straight into dividing the YP into groups and dispatching them out to the activity areas. There was no intro from the AT side as to what to expect, not even basic housekeeping/fire drill was covered – workers were frustrated at having to work on a Sunday and at having to wait to get going and it showed. There was no intro from the DYA side, although it may have been possible for the YWs bringing the YP to the day to have done some form of intro en route or in advance (but probably not, from conversations with the YP during the day)</p>			
<p>Activity process (who does what, actions, reactions, interventions, outcomes, changes in group, roles in group, sequential/incremental learning): The day was focussed by the adventure workers on just doing the activity. It was very much a “right we’re doing this” and “you will do this, like this” – the time allocated to each session was tight, not really enough to do anything more than give the YP a taste of the activity. For once the aims of the day were specified to DC beforehand, although they had not been passed on to the workers in advance, so there was no valid opportunity to relate what was being done to developing communication, decision-making or even to explore anything more than getting through the activity. The adventure workers were very much the leaders to each activity, directing YP on what to do and how to do it, making the sessions quite robotic and not so engaging for the YP. Some YP appreciated that, because of their lack of familiarity with the activity or lack of confidence. Others however, clearly would have appreciated and benefited more from a less directive approach. I observed/supported 2 different activities on the day: JL with AC and low ropes with PG. AC was short with the YP if they showed any desire to deviate from given directions, even being impatient and somewhat derisory at signs of nervousness and fear – yet for goodness sake, YP are being asked to climb</p>			

over 4m into the air, walk along a beam and then climb another 5m to the top! That brings jelly to the bravest of legs! It affected the naturalness of the session in the way the YP interacted, talked, engaged. They went through the motions but in a very muted fashion. PG was more encouraging, but began to get frustrated when the YP were not as competent as he'd have liked. There was more chatter and laughter though, which made the session better for all concerned.

**Debrief:**

None again! There was a quick 'good bye' but absolutely nothing to explore learning, experiences, or even to ensure that the experience was positive for everyone. DC found it amusing that I should think there should be some debrief & make the day longer, pointing out that it's Sunday, people want something of their weekend and the group were late to start with – not the most inspiring leadership example I have ever seen!

**Where are group leaders throughout session:**

A couple of DYA staff wandered around with cameras for a short period during each session but then went to join all the other leaders in the meeting room for coffee/biscuits/chatter. One or two leaders wandered about on occasions to see how their YP were doing but there was no effort to support the young people consistently. It makes me wonder how the aims of the session can be achieved even at a later date if they don't see what's going on in the first place.

**Initial thoughts/feelings**

56 YP had booked and only 20 turned up (possibly because it was a Sunday and an early start!). 7 adventure staff because such a large group were planned to be here – activities planned were raft building, low ropes, team games, Jacob's Ladder, High V's and tubes.

None of the YP began arriving until past 9 am, all came in 2s and 3s, mostly with some YW staff from local youth clubs or staff from schools. Altogether, there were 9 support staff and also LW as the ADYA coordinator.

By the time there were a reasonable number of YP arrived to begin considering dividing into groups and starting activities, and by the time they all had a drink and consents had been checked and chased, it was past 10 am. Each YP was meant to be doing 3 activities in the day for an hour. That in itself is insufficient time properly to do any activity. The plan was blown out of the water straight away by the way in which the day started! The planned group split could not happen because there was less than half the expected number of YP so the first step was to re-organise the groupings. It all took time and the staff became increasingly frustrated. Support staff from youth clubs and schools but they effectively handed them over to adventure staff and then disappeared into the Base Room to drink tea, eat biscuits and chat amongst themselves. There was no intention from anyone to be involved at all in the day's activities, other than to take pictures for their own clubs and projects.

Activities finally began about 10.30. There had been no general intro to the

day or the sessions, no clarification as to the aims of the day – just a brief welcome talk, to point out toilets, fire procedures, rules on smoking, etc. YP were not briefed by anyone of either staff group at any point evidently as to the aims of the day or what they could be getting from the activities or why the day had been organised.

Within each individual session, there was no full intro of aims & objectives, just an outline or what to do – very much a process of engaging for the sake of the activity. As a learning process, there was nothing. At the end of the activity there was no debrief, other than “did you enjoy that” type of questioning.

The lunch break saw activity staff segregate themselves from the YP by remaining in the room where the food was laid out, with most of the support staff, whereas the YP were congregated in the courtyard or in the meeting room.

At the end there was a general “hope you enjoyed yourselves and goodbye” but no debrief.

The opportunity to engage with YP was lost by activity staff as well as support staff. The YP were largely unknown to one another and they worked amongst themselves to get along and talk to each other.

Participant observation schedule:

Observation 1	Climbing	Out of County group
Observation 2	Multi-activity session	Out of County group
Observation 3	Climbing	Statutory youth group
Observation 4	Multi-activity session	Own youth group
Observation 5	Multi-activity session	County youth group
Observation 6	Orienteering	Statutory youth group
Observation 7	Water activities	Own youth group
Observation 8	Team games session	County youth group

## Secondary Data Proforma

Document title	A review of (name removed) Provision for "Environmental, Outdoor and Adventurous Education" in Children and Young People's Services (Document 30)		
Who wrote it (position in organisation)	[Name of author] [Position in organisation]		
Aim	Evaluation of options for future		
Target audience	Management of LA		
Internal/External	External	Date	2008
<p>Focus/purpose Review &amp; analyse adventure &amp; environmental education provision across all YP services of LA</p> <p>(quote from document) Objectives of the Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) To offer a full depiction of what is currently provided by Children and Young People's Services in environmental, outdoor and adventurous education.</li> <li>ii) To analyse this provision and set it against future needs, especially taking cognisance of Every Child Matters, Youth Matters and the Learning Outside the Classroom manifesto, linked with the expectations of the Children and Young People's Plan and the school improvement agenda.</li> <li>iii) To undertake a strategic analysis of different management models and structures that could potentially provide a more efficient and effective way to deliver these services.</li> <li>iv) Recommend a variety of models for delivery outlining the structures, costs, the educational impact on and value to young people for each.</li> </ul>			
<p>Summary of document</p> <p>Authority has a high reputation for the adventure &amp; environmental education provision among its users and among the sector nationally. Recommendation is that the Authority embrace the opportunities that are available to young people provided by the joint activities of the environmental, adventurous and outdoor education teams.</p> <p>3 potential options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Rebrand and restructure to drive forward the LOTC agenda but remain completely separate entities</li> <li>2 Enhanced Collaboration between the teams but remain operationally separate</li> <li>3 Merger of the teams into one LOTC team</li> </ul> <p>Further recommendations for consideration/cost efficiencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Centralised bookings of day centre activities and residential;</li> <li>b) Co-Referral of potential user groups between services</li> <li>c) Involve young people much more in resource allocation and decision-making</li> <li>d) Build programmes for target user groups to use the level of skills of staff better</li> <li>e) Joint pursuit of additional funding</li> </ul>			



First impressions:

Good document, clearly sets out position & analysis of Adventure Team, with good range of interviews conducted.

Easy to read

Very 'external' – no experience or knowledge of adventure or environmental ed by authors

Themes:

3 options – good team, under-utilised skills – recognises outcomes of YP

Any known impact:

Management not happy didn't give single option apparently, they still had to make a decision!

Primary conclusions & evidence:

Clear analysis that supports much of findings of research

Actually good tool for management d-m, sets out options clearly but not really any implications of each drawn

Useful quotations?

Outdoor education therefore has two distinct characters: involuntary, supporting core education, and voluntary, supporting more general personal and team development, but those characters can be mutually reinforcing (p5)

Schools were very supportive of the provision and when asked what the implications might be if provision were to be scaled down the responses showed that there would be a good deal of consternation (p35)

[Managers interviewed] All had professional connections with environmental, outdoor and adventure education within Nottinghamshire but with the exception of a representative of EESS, all tended to have used facilities for adventure activities (p37)

All services offered through environmental, outdoor and adventurous education provision fit closely with the 5 Every Child Matters Outcomes (p39)

Clearly it is not possible to travel to facilities, take part in activities and travel back to base in three hours; the problem is amplified for Workers who support people with disabilities who may need extra help (p41)

Staffing capacity is a key constraint to maximising usage (p46)

They need to maintain adherence to local delivery needs and local values (p53)

This is not a failing service about which something must be done – this is a valued and respected service where the emphasis is on making sure that as many young people who should benefit from the service are able to do so (p60)

## Documents analysed:

	Document title	Use of document	Production	Document type	Internal / External	Intended audience
Document 1	High Quality Youth Work Outdoors	General Authority information	Adventure Team	Booklet	Internal	Youth Service
Document 2	Staff briefing background & context	General Authority information	Adventure Team	Document	Internal	Adventure Team
Document 3	Draft consultation – structure for [local authority]	General Authority information	Corporate leadership	Document	Internal	Authority staff
Document 4	Impact report	General Authority information	Departmental leadership	Document	Internal	Corporate leadership
Document 5	Adventurous Activities handout	General Authority information	Adventure Team	Booklet	Internal	Youth Service
Document 6	Health & heritage briefing document	General Authority information	Youth Service	Document	Internal	Youth Service
Document 7	Promoting mental & social health	General Authority information	Youth Service	Document	Internal	Youth Service
Document 8	Learning Outside the Classroom provision agreement	Adventure workers	Division	Document	Internal	Corporate leadership
Document 9	Adventure provision report	Adventure workers	Adventure Team	Document	Internal	Divisional leadership
Document 10	Tell Us Survey 2008	Experience of young people	National	Survey	External	Authority
Document 11	Tell Us Survey 2009	Experience of young people	National	Survey	External	Authority
Document 12	Figures 2005-06	Facilities / experience of young people	Adventure Team	Database	Internal	Divisional leadership
Document 13	Figures 2006-07	Facilities / experience of young people	Adventure Team	Database	Internal	Divisional leadership
Document 14	Figures 2007-08	Facilities /	Adventure Team	Database	Internal	Divisional

		experience of young people				leadership
Document 15	Figures 2008-09	Facilities / experience of young people	Adventure Team	Database	Internal	Divisional leadership
Document 16	Deficit management	Financial perspective	Corporate leadership	Document	Internal	Divisional leadership
Document 17	Financial data 2005-06	Financial perspective	Adventure Team	Database	Internal	Divisional leadership
Document 18	Financial data 2006-07	Financial perspective	Adventure Team	Database	Internal	Divisional leadership
Document 19	Financial data 2007-08	Financial perspective	Adventure Team	Database	Internal	Divisional leadership
Document 20	Financial data 2008-09	Financial perspective	Adventure Team	Database	Internal	Divisional leadership
Document 21	Financial data 2009-10	Financial perspective	Adventure Team	Database	Internal	Divisional leadership
Document 22	So You Think You Know About [the local authority]?	History	Corporate leadership	Presentation	Internal	Divisional staff
Document 23	Operational Plan Adventure 2010-11	History	Adventure Team	Document	Internal	Leadership team
Document 24	Statement of Purpose	History	Corporate leadership	Statement	External	General public
Document 25	Quality Assurance inspection framework	Leadership & management	Corporate leadership	Document	Internal	Divisional staff
Document 26	Performance Management Framework	Leadership & management	Corporate leadership	Document	Internal	Divisional staff
Document 27	Strategy for modernisation of the workforce	Leadership & management	Corporate leadership	Document	Internal	Authority staff
Document 28	Learning Outside the Classroom proposal	Since 2010	Division	Document	Internal	Corporate leadership
Document 29	Youth Service proposal	Since 2010	Division	Document	Internal	Corporate leadership

Document 30	Strategic Plan	Since 2010	Departmental leadership	Document	Internal	Corporate leadership
Document 31	Head of Service Professional level presentation	Since 2010	Youth Service	Presentation	Internal	Youth Service staff
Document 32	Putting the front line first	Since 2010	Local Government Office	Document	Internal	Corporate leadership
Document 33	Chief Exec Business plan	Since 2010	Corporate leadership	Document	Internal	Authority staff
Document 34	Improvement Programme report	Since 2010	Divisional leadership	Document	Internal	Authority staff
Document 35	Strategic update	Since 2010	Departmental leadership	Document	Internal	Corporate leadership
Document 36	Integrated Youth Service presentation	Since 2010	Youth Service	Presentation	Internal	Youth Service staff
Document 37	Learning Outside the Classroom business plan	Since 2010	Learning Outside the Classroom team	Document	Internal	Divisional leadership
Document 38	Adventure Guide	Specific adventure guide	Adventure Team	Booklet	External	General public
Document 39	Adventure Guide insert	Specific adventure guide	Adventure Team	Information sheet	External	General public

## Extract of interview with Avery, a young person

Interviewer	What risks do you think there are in the activities that you will do whilst you are here	
Avery	Undesirables - <u>people I don't like or we don't want here</u> might wish to take part or activities <u>may</u> damage people's health 'cos they can be dangerous if people get stupid	<u>Possessiveness of centre/activities?</u> <u>Risk &amp; safety</u>
Interviewer	How do you think that these are managed by the staff here	
Avery	Staff teach <u>how to prevent accidents and have the power to ban the undesirables</u>	<u>Adventure workers</u> <u>Perceptions YP have of power?</u>
Interviewer	How aware were you of why you were coming here and what you should be learning/gaining from being here	
Avery	I came because <u>I don't like regular sports</u> . My uncle suggested to my dad I <u>come</u> because he works here for Schools Team	<u>Experiences of YP</u> <u>Power of family?</u> <u>Motivation?</u>
Interviewer	Does anyone explain to you what you might learn from being involved?	
Avery	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Learning provision</u>
Interviewer	Was there any review of the activity and what you learnt when you finished	
Avery	<u>I had a logbook to record skills I learnt</u>	<u>Learning provision</u> (Skill acquisition / formal)
Interviewer	What do you think you learnt	
Avery	<u>How to sail</u>	<u>Learning provision</u> Skills – PD??

## Extract of interview with Dylan, adventure worker

Interviewer	And how does your engagement with adventure as a young person affect how you deliver now and how you manage activities now?	
Dylan	I think for young people these days it's not cool to play out, it's cooler to have PlayStations and that kind of thing and nice clothes. They don't want to go out and get dirty. So to give them opportunities where they can go out and have an adventure, or realise that there's more than just sitting, that we are a small island with a lot of people on it but there are wide open spaces – and I like to take people out and show them what's on their doorstep. It frustrates me at times because of how little safety kit or even thought to safety that we gave to it as kids growing up and as a family, to all the hoops that we have to jump through now – and some of them make perfect sense but sometimes I think bureaucracy and administration takes away from what we offer.	Experiences of YP Adventure workers Environment Risk & safety
Interviewer	To what extent do you liaise with the groups that make the bookings before they come to design a programme specifically for them and to meet their needs?	
Dylan	If it's a group that's got a good worker with them who's quite open and honest about the nature of the young people and what they want to do and how they want to do it, and if workers are happy to come down and get involved in that way, then I can have a massive amount of input into their programme design; but with other workers, they don't want to tell you what their young people are like and don't want to come down here for anything other than a little bit of respite and they come down here to use you as a babysitter then it's quite hard. So you design a programme that you want to deliver or that you tweak as you get to learn about the young people and make it best fit their needs.	Partnerships Trust, knowledge with others? Adventure as a learning provision
Interviewer	How do you think adventure fits into the Every Child Matters framework?	
Dylan	It's massive I think. I've always been a big believer in adventure or outdoor learning or just spending time outside and how big an effect that can have on groups and individuals. But with Every Child Matters, it allows young people to risk assess perceived risky activities and how they can best safeguard themselves and others. Being healthy – well, it's active and gets young people like myself who wasn't really into team sports, so football, cricket, rugby got left behind at school because I wasn't interested in that but it gave me a sort of sporting focus in terms of active lifestyles. Then there's enjoying and achieving – because the challenges of adventure can be quite high, something challenging can also bring enjoyment to young people because when they achieve something that they think is beyond them. And then with the economic one, we've proved and I'm sure it's been proved elsewhere that with young people who quite easily fit into a box of becoming teenage parents, probably on	Unstructured experiences? Risk & safety Experiences of YP Outcomes Experiences of YP Outcomes Outcomes

	<p>job seekers allowance, can come into the industry and earn a good wage, above minimum wage, whereas before for them to work in a local supermarket or a petrol station was probably more in the vein of where they would end up. It's that aspirational viewpoint that it can give people that changes them.</p>	<p>Adventure as a learning provision</p>
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## Extract of interview with Sam, a manager

Interviewer	Do you think there is any theory that underpins the work of the Adventure Team?	
Sam	<p>The theory for me is challenge. I mean, going back to the Bill Tillman books, the Edmund Hillary books, where I think the 'sense of adventure' came from – it was about giving young people challenges. They don't have challenges now given through society, they don't have ... I was going to say wars, but you'd have to take Iraq out of it. You don't have the challenge that our predecessors used to have with regards to world conflict, etc. What you do have are young people who are providing those needs and addressing their conflict needs through fighting on the street and finding their adrenaline buzzes through drugs, through alcohol. The risk taking behaviour overflows that. There's very little respect of communities any more because of the way I think young people are being demonised by communities, as they get older because they don't see young people doing anything constructively. Adventurous activities, Duke of Edinburgh Award and the like build the sort of self-awareness and the self worth that they don't need to use drugs or alcohol to get the feel good factor. You can get them elsewhere through activities and that's what adventure gives them the opportunity to do and for me, it's also about the level of fitness that you build up by doing the activities. It's demonstrated in some of the extreme sports now, it means that you get to a point where, if you start taking drugs or using alcohol or abusing it, it's actually to the detriment of your being able to deliver those activities and get the buzz. So, it's a self-fulfilling prophecy that the better you do in those activities, the more you want to expand the and the more you want to become fitter and the more you want to avoid risk taking behaviour and abusing the body really.</p>	<p>Adventure as a learning provision</p> <p>Experiences of YP</p> <p>Risk &amp; safety</p> <p>Experiences of YP</p> <p>Outcomes</p> <p>Outcomes</p> <p>Outcomes</p> <p>Risk &amp; safety</p>
Interviewer	How can adventure be used as a form of informal learning?	
Sam	<p>It's not so much can it, as it must be. Adventure, by the pure nature of taking up a new activity, means that something must be learnt. If the activity is engaging enough and the young people really want to do it, because they want to achieve an end goal, then they have to learn, they have to concentrate. With the attention span of young people nowadays being anything between two minutes and twenty minutes, then unless you've engaged them in the first thirty seconds with something positive then you've lost them. Adventure activities give the opportunities for learning but outside of a normal environment. Whether it's at [BASE NAME] or in the middle of the Peak District, what you're doing if</p>	<p>Adventure as a learning provision</p> <p>Adventure workers</p> <p>Outcomes</p> <p>Adventure as a learning provision</p> <p>Adventure workers</p> <p>Adventure as a learning provision</p>



	<p>you're taking young people away from their comfort zone, away from their [NAME] estate or their [NAME] estate, to somewhere where, by the nature of what they're doing, if they don't listen then they're putting themselves at risk it doesn't take long to engage them in the process where if they're standing on top of a cliff face it focuses the adrenaline. It also makes them feel uncomfortable so they have to listen. And again, the rope, the harness, the helmet – they're things the young people want to put on because they're a uniform and that starts the learning process, albeit a subversive learning process, that then leads on to learning as to working in a group, learning as to new skills, learning that clipped up on a rock face or in a canoe if you don't listen you get wet or show yourself up – which is quite important to young people not to show themselves up. That's where the learning element starts to breathe and I think learning is infectious once you start on the process. If you can engage them in the first thirty seconds to ten minutes then it'll carry on. So, adventure is an excellent tool.</p>	<p>Risk &amp; safety</p> <p>Adventure as a learning provision</p> <p>Adventure as a learning provision</p> <p>Adventure workers</p>
Interviewer	To what extent do you think that adventure can be used in a formal curriculum?	
Sam	<p>I think it's limitless. Learning Outside the Classroom has taught us that no matter what you want to do, there's an opportunity to learn from it. Where we have to be imaginative is to take those opportunities to learn from it and build it into what we perceive and what we are identifying now as vocational opportunities and learning opportunities. So, we have to be imaginative in the way we do it and to engage young people and I think I'll use the example of budgeting. The simple activity of going away and camping for a weekend, where you need to buy food, you have to go to the supermarket and you have a limited amount of money. How are you going to manage that? It's budgeting and therefore maths, down to literacy and English, writing down. You've already got a wealth of opportunities to link those into the curriculum. It just depends how imaginative you can be, how imaginatively you can use it.</p>	<p>Adventure as a learning provision</p> <p>Adventure workers</p> <p>Adventure as a learning provision</p> <p>Adventure workers</p>

## Extract of interview with Dana, a group leader

Interviewer	What made you choose to include adventure in your programme?	
Dana	Give students opportunities to do things that they might not otherwise attempt	Adventure as a learning provision
Interviewer	What are the aims and objectives of the programme being delivered through Adventure	
Dana	To learn new skills, to work with other people, to try new things, to broaden experiences	Adventure as a learning provision
Interviewer	How do you know that you are achieving these	
Dana	Young people come out with certificates of achievement and participation; they are more confident and knowledgeable	Outcomes
Interviewer	To what extent have you collaborated with the Adventure Team in making your booking regarding the programme aims	
Dana	I discussed what we wanted prior to the programme starting and MAB staff suggested activities	Partnerships with other agencies
Interviewer	Did anyone explain to the young people what they might learn from being involved in adventurous activities?	
Dana	I think all of the trainers here do that before the activity starts, don't they?	Adventure workers
Interviewer	What (if any) sort of review took place to assess the learning of the young people?	
Dana	It's done informally at the end. A written form of evaluation would be good, but we'd need to complete it here while the young people are 'in the zone', 'cos they forget once they leave here	Adventure as a learning provision
Interviewer	What do you think the young people learnt?	
Dana	Some have gained a lot, they are more open to new ideas, they have learned how important it is to be part of a team	Outcomes

## Analysis of participant observation session

Site:	[Adventure Base name]
Group:	[Area name] District Youth Assembly
Date:	06.02.11
Time:	9.30 to 3
Planned activity:	Team games, sailing, paddling, high ropes, low ropes, rafting
Adventure workers:	7
Group leaders:	20(ish)
Planned young people:	65
Actual young people:	20

65 YP had booked and only 20 turned up (possibly because it was a Sunday and an early start!).

Beautiful weather, really warm.

7 staff because such a large group were planned to be here – activities planned were raft building, low ropes, team games, Jacob's Ladder, High V's and tubes.

None of the YP began arriving until past 9 am, all came in 2s and 3s, mostly with some YW staff from local youth clubs or staff from schools. Altogether, there were 9 support staff and also LW as the DYA coordinator.

By the time there were a reasonable number of YP arrived to begin considering dividing into groups and starting activities, and by the time they all had a drink and consents had been checked and chased, it was past 10 am. Each YP was meant to be doing 3 activities in the day for an hour. That in itself is insufficient time properly to do any activity. The plan was blown out of the water straight away by the way in which the day started! The planned group split could not happen because there was less than half the expected number of YP so the first step was to re-organise the groupings. It all took time and the staff became increasingly frustrated. Support staff from youth clubs and schools but they effectively handed them over to adventure staff and then disappeared into the Base Room to drink tea, eat biscuits and chat amongst themselves. There was no intention from anyone to be involved at all in the day's activities, other than to take pictures for their own clubs and projects.

Activities finally began about 10.30. There had been no general intro to the day or the sessions, no clarification as to the aims of the day – just a brief welcome talk, to point out toilets, fire procedures, rules on smoking, etc. YP were not briefed by anyone of either staff group at any point evidently as to the aims of the day or what they could be getting from the activities or why the day had been organised.

Within each individual session, there was no full intro of aims & objectives, just an outline or what to do – very much a process of engaging for the sake of the activity. As a learning process, there was nothing. At the end of the activity there was no debrief, other than "did you enjoy that" type of questioning.

The lunch break saw activity staff segregate themselves from the YP by remaining in the Base Room (where the food was laid out) with most of the support staff, whereas the YP were congregated in the courtyard or in the meeting room.

At the end there was a general "hope you enjoyed yourselves and goodbye" but no debrief.

The opportunity to engage with YP was lost by activity staff as well as support staff.

The YP were largely unknown to one another and they worked amongst themselves to get along and talk to each other.	
History of the Adventure Team	n/a
Partnerships with other agencies	<p>The event was organised by the YA as a 'recruitment drive' &amp; as a means to enable YP to get to know each other a bit. County YA Co-Ordinator had organised it, but each locality was required to bring some YP &amp; a YW was expected to transport them &amp; attend with them. LW hadn't shared her plan for the day or the intention of the activities with any of the districts, so YW had no idea of what activities were planned or what the plan of the day was. Aside from the activities booked, there seemed to be no overall plan of objectives or how the activities could feed into a wider programme of engagement – not the responsibility of Adventure, but surely should have been discussed at some point since the booking was made. LW seemed to be quite OK with the whole lack of a framework, she sat chatting to the YW most of the day, drinking tea, eating biscuits and running the barbecue for lunch, whilst the activities went on around her and without her input or intervention.</p>
Experiences of the young people	<p>All seemed to have a really good day, all participated and enjoyed what they did but it came very much into a day of recreational activities, without any structure or overall plan of achieving the intended aim of expanding the DYA; there didn't seem to be any co-ordinated approach other than doing the activities.</p> <p>For the YP who turned up, it wasn't clear that they knew what to expect – not likely as the YW didn't know themselves what was planned or how the day should have worked. As a Sunday, early morning start, the YP who came were naturally the more participative and driven, so they were up for taking part in everything and having a good time, if nothing else.</p>
The adventure workers	<p>Disillusioned from the start, the workers just focussed on getting their job done and delivering activities. Having motivated YP was a positive and good weather was a bonus! The delivery was routine, taster-type style; with no other plan to go on, the adventure workers just went out there and gave the YP a taste of the activity. They weren't interested in any overall plan for using the activities for developing the DYA, partly because they are very sceptical of the notion of a youth assembly and partly because the day never seemed to have any sort of plan – joint LW &amp; CH at fault?</p>
Adventure Team Managers	<p>CH wasn't even on site all day; he was expected but never showed, so if he ever had any notion or plan for the day's structure it was never going to be shared with the staff! No-one was surprised he wasn't there, usual cynical remarks about Sundays and managers' motivation!</p> <p>More senior management = n/a</p>
Risk & safety	<p>The activities are all run frequently at the base, all the equipment is in order and regularly checked so there was no concern on that score.</p> <p>If there had been the full amount of YP, there may have been a struggle with staff ratios, as there are restrictions on things like sailing and kayaking, which then bump up the numbers of other activities like team games. It also means some young</p>

	people may not get to do all the activities they want. Co-ordination would have been a nightmare. There were also no 'spare' staff to float and give a helping hand, CH had been planned for that but never showed.
External environment	It's a drive of Government that the DYA be established and give a voice to YP – all very commendable, but not successful when that voice is not allowed to be heard because the adults organising the platform are not terribly effective. It felt a bit like an exercise in being seen to be complying rather than full commitment to ensuring success.
Financial perspective	For the Adventure Team, the day was funded irrespective of any shortfalls in planning or structure, so there was no incentive for anyone from the adventure side to step in, nor was there an incentive for the YW to take over.
Outcomes	The YP had a good day, perhaps learnt a few new basic skills, got to chat to some new people, but overall there didn't seem to be an outcome that would facilitate an overall result in the future in respect of the DYA or the longer term evolution of the YP.
Adventure as a learning provision	Not the greatest success in anything more than basic taster skills, no long term learning for the young people or feeding into a structure of learning or development or lifelong engagement.

Extract of documentary review analysis (Document 23 Operational Plan Adventure 2010-11)

<p><b>Overview of forthcoming year.</b> (include elements of joint working with Connexions as appropriate, and local action plan as an appendix)</p> <p>2010 will see a number of operational changes to Adventure which will create opportunities for development to the benefit of Young People of [Authority name].</p> <p><b>A.</b> Adventure camp, during the past couple of years we have been requested by Youth Clubs / Youth Workers to provide a low cost residential experience for Young People. For 2010 Adventure will provide two static camps at [adventure base name] &amp; [adventure base name] together with a programme range of adventure activities, these camps will be of two night's duration, or four night's duration. Information regarding these camps will be released together with the Adventure Guide</p> <p><b>B.</b> Following on from the successful programme of summer holidays activities at [adventure base name], we will be operating a similar programme at [adventure base name]; both projects will target age range 11 – 19 however some dates will be for restricted ages only. Both projects will operate for 6 days during Easter and four weeks during the summer, with a core activity plus additional activities. Both of these projects will be income generated projects offering similar activities for the same price (day rate), to offset the additional hours worked by staff members. [District name] District Council has confirmed that they will contribute £1,000 towards the [adventure base name] scheme; Adventure will try to obtain similar amount from local councils for [adventure base name].</p> <p><b>C.</b> [Adventure worker] YSW2 (11.1 hours) has indicated that he wishes to retire from the Youth Service in March 2010, also Adventure has lost the technician post at [adventure base name] (30hrs), given these two factors, I am proposing that we take this opportunity to change our Youth Work staffing at both sites by disestablishing the existing 11.1 hours; establishing 3 hours of YSW2 for [adventure base name] to support the Youth Club now established (Thursday evenings). Establishing the remaining 8.1 hours to be split between the existing Wednesday night Youth Club and the establishment of an additional open access club on Saturday afternoons in partnership with the Pathfinder scheme. (Please note, the existing Youth Club committee and YP who attend on Wednesday evening, declined the offer to move the Wednesday club to a Friday evening with additional hours)</p> <p><b>D.</b></p>	<p>Adventure Team managers</p> <p>Partnerships with other agencies</p> <p>Experiences of YP</p> <p>Publicity!</p> <p>Experiences of YP</p> <p>Financial perspective</p> <p>Partnerships with other agencies</p> <p>Financial perspective</p> <p>Experiences of YP</p> <p>Partnerships with other agencies</p>
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<p>One of the potential issues which may be problematic during 2010 is the number of ft. workers who are undergoing training and will be on placements during the year 2010. To lessen the impact on our service provision and for continuity for staff, I am proposing to move the responsibility for staffing &amp; programming from [Adventure worker] to [Adventure worker]. This will enable us to programme [Adventure worker] and [Adventure worker] to deliver face to face around their placement requirement. [Adventure worker] and [Adventure worker] will retain their responsibility for the supervision of seasonal workers.</p>	<p>Adventure workers</p>
<p><b>E.</b> Depending on the number and skills of the seasonal worker appointed, it is Adventure intention to operate skill base water activities sessions (targeting BCU &amp; RYA accreditation) at [adventure base name] on Saturday morning for both Kayaking and Sailing. Followed by an open sailing / kayaking drop in session in the afternoon this will be linked together with the Pathfinder sailing project.</p>	<p>Outcomes</p> <p>Experiences of YP</p>
<p>By increasing the provision on Saturdays we may have to look again at what level (grade) of worker is acceptable to the Youth Support Service, AALS and the NGB's to ensure that we are providing adequate and suitable senior cover throughout the day</p>	<p>Adventure Team managers</p>
<p>This may require the Adventure team adopting either of the following working patterns:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. moving the normal working week for ft worker to Tuesday – Saturday, so in effect closing the Adventure team at [adventure base name] every Monday during between April - October</li> <li>2. having a rota of Tuesday – Saturday / Monday Friday working pattern</li> <li>3. 6 day working week followed by a 4 day working week</li> <li>4. split the week between [staff names] so we have senior cover at [adventure base name] throughout our normal working pattern of 6 days / evenings per week</li> </ol>	
<p>Any of the options listed, is dependant on the existing ft worker having the appropriate NGB qualifications or supervising a seasonal worker/s holding a suitable NGB's.</p>	<p>Adventure workers</p>
<p><b>F.</b> At both sites we now have established 'Youth Club'; although in both cases the YP attending these evenings / days do so to participate in Adventure activities first and for most. However there has been a developing need from demand by young people for an area to be as a social / youth club format, and not using adventure activities, the Youth Club committee at [adventure base name] have expressed the wish for a 'cool' area and if possible a tuck shop. To accommodate this request and retain the need to</p>	<p>Experiences of YP</p>

<p>provide suitable accommodation as a Countywide resource, it was proposed to change the large meeting room into a 'Youth Club' with the introduction of soft furniture etc.</p> <p>However on reflection given the fact that this room is used to accommodate large groups, holiday clubs, meeting etc, and the loss of such a room would impact on the flexibility made available by a large uncluttered room. Agreement has been reached with the YP to make Trent room more accessible / available, by the introduction of new furniture, sound system etc in conjunction with the schools team. Alongside this change, the large meeting room will be made available for games, electronic and physical, all of which can be cleared away to retain the availability of a large room.</p> <p><b>G.</b></p> <p>With the 'progression' sessions proposed move from Friday evenings to Saturday mornings, the Adventure staff team has loosely discussed having a Friday night Youth Club, however we need to take into account YP views expressed in section <b>C</b> and the staffing issues raised in section <b>E</b>.</p>	<p>Experiences of YP</p>
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